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Frances Irene

from

Celeste D. Heckscher

NBI

Heckscher

Through Dust to Light

Poems from an
Apprenticeship

By

Robert Valantine Heckscher

Boston
Sherman, French & Company
1911

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IN

MEMORY

OF

MY FATHER

32X660

BROKEN

One branch, my Father, will I bear for thee;
Thou wert too good for life, too fair for death—
And thou art summoned, where no mortal breath
May cloud thine image; immortality
Fixes thy features, statue-like, for me—
And I grow strong, in gazing from beneath:
I thought not even to live, to lay this wreath
Upon thy breast—alas! 'tis God's decree:

No more! . . . no more of tears! But, when the sun
Hangs, like an apple, and the golden Earth
Gathers her sheaves—when every leaflet burns
For freedom, All Hearts' Sacrifice, and yearns
The whole world for that Day of blessed birth—
Time turns his hour-glass, and we are one!

Notes

This book contains about one-third of the Poems of my Apprenticeship, during its first three years.

I have arranged them under those attributes of Poetry, either from which they have mainly sprung, or toward which they were chiefly directed—Truth, Good and Beauty—the latter of which I have again divided into three parts—Emotion, Fancy and Fantasy.

The Trinity of Poetry—Truth, Good and Beauty—enter into all perfect Poems, but into imperfect ones in unequal proportions.

Under the division Truth, I have therefore placed those Poems which are of the nature of a revelation; under the division Good, those which enclose morality; under Emotion, songs, or that which, like music, in demanding immediate expression, examines not its morality; under Fancy and Fantasy, those Poems which are so characterized by their use of images.

For the sake of gathering the "Songs from a Garden," however, I have transposed a few Poems. Were I asked, however, why they nearly all have as their motive Good—I should reply that, to me, all heavenly things seem to owe their beauty to their obedience to divine

laws, that is, to being Good; and so the flower seems ever an illustration of some divine law. Thus it has been my care to admire it in that light, and to determine what divine law it has obeyed to become so beautiful. In a word, I have felt that whatever is true to Heaven, the Ideal State, or the Truth—whatever is thus Good—will be Beautiful, it being an Appearance, Illustration, or Expression of that Eternal Truth.

Metaphorically, therefore, the flowers may well be called the stars, the Angels' eyes, that best show their thoughts and feelings—and perhaps those Angels are men's Souls.

It may be noted that the three divisions—Truth, Good and Beauty—correspond to the Religious or Prophetic, the Moral, and the Artistic or Aesthetic.

Perhaps, too, it may be worth their while to some for them to notice a variation on the usual Shakespearian form of the Sonnet—where—instead of tagging the couplet to the quatrains—by allowing the emotion to crystallize in its own form, I have discovered more unity and climax in letting the three quatrains, like waves, break over into the couplet.

This Preface, however, in which I entrust to the Reader a simple confession of the

sources and object of this work, was intended neither to raise his hopes, nor to show any value in my work, but rather in how far it falls short of my ideals.

I have been obliged to write—never too often, but often too poorly—by a constant perception of Life through Nature, of Spiritual Laws in Natural Phenomena—the Perception of Unity. I would define my Motives, therefore, as the "Illustration of Law," or as the "Interpretation of Natural Phenomena in Terms of Life."

However often I have failed, or spent my time on subjects unworthy—or rather unworthily, for I have found no subject uninteresting, as every mood reveals something of Life—these were the intentions. And the dominant notes will be found to be those of Compensation, Unity, the "Raison D'etre" or useful Function of Evil, and Evolution with its eternal round of Rebirth.

However often I have tried to keep to these high themes, the work has resulted in a sort of Panorama, the Panorama of Life. And it is for this reason, namely, that I have found no subject or mood uninteresting, because it revealed Life, however weak, that I pray the reader to accept these Poems in the Spirit, rather than in the Letter—and, if I seem to

assign too high a motive to these miserable works, to remember with pity, that even the Poor proceed from God.

R. V. H.

Strafford, 1908
Rome, 1909

P. S.—Thanks is due the *Atlantic Monthly* for permission to reprint several poems.

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THROUGH DUST TO LIGHT

ERRATA

Page 14, line 11, read "wondrous" before "fair."
Page 97, line 3, read "heavens" for "heaven."
Page 99, line 6 of poem "FAITH," read "shall" for "will."
Page 109, line 15, read "noon" for "moon."

ELEUSINIAN

Enough! that I have known tremendous things—
Stood, like a star, above the night sublime—
Watching the movements of the Watch of Time,
Hearing the exquisite music of its rings;
To this all else is naught—what Poet sings,
Painters depict, or what Musicians chime—
For I have heard and seen tremendous things
Unutterable, save in God's own rhyme!

All Heaven lies about me, which I see
Entering to my soul—but to express
Would be to build another world more fair;
This, God forbid, to such a soul as me—
Except, when startled by its loveliness,
To call thee in—His praise beyond compare!

A PICTURE

Just a beam of sunlight drooping
  In a dusty attic room—
Just a little woman stooping
  Over sewing in the gloom—
Just a worn and sunken bedstead
  And a single broken chair—
And yet—ah, God! how beautiful,
  A world is hiding there!

A VISION OF THE JUDGMENT

I stood in dream on the embattled shore,
Whose frowning cliffs o'erbrowed the thundering deep —
When lo! with vision clear and boundless sweep,
I saw an emptied sea, and its vast floor
Swarming, as if with black flies, covered o'er
By living millions! Some did pray and weep,
While some, with faces wan and clenched, did creep
And grovel, as their robes and hair they tore!

Then spake an Angel, brandishing his sword—
"Arise! ye Pure in Heart—your home be mine!"
But, in those millions, not one made a sign:
Then cried I out — "For Christ's sake spare them, Lord!"
When sung the sweetest voice, I ever heard —
"Dost think my love for them is less than thine?"

DIURNAL MOTION

He lets one half the earth be bright,
The rest in darkness keep—
He gives his life to those in light
And to the darkling sleep;

That those, who see, may soon be blind,
That blind may see the skies—
The risen may lie down behind,
That those, who sleep, may rise!

LIFE IN DEATH

THE sea is calm; the holy night
Withholds the morning harmonies—
And with a sure, exultant light
The world is watched by Angels' eyes!

The sea is calm; and not a sound
Awakes a wave in slumber's spell—
But oh! I feel, my Soul unbound,
God is at work! and all is well!

THE MARCH OF STARS

TRIUMPHANT march the golden stars,
Their hymns of battle singing—
The wheels of fire upon their cars,
And all their armor ringing;
Up mounts of night, through sun-stained bars
Then cloudy oceans flinging—
Triumphant march the golden stars,
Towards His conquest swinging!

No lights outlast, no thunders blast
From Hell's tremendous regions—
No closing seas of sunset past
Have cleft their perfect legions;
Though down, among the matchless wars,
A comet ride, returning—
Triumphant march the golden stars,
Earths, earths for God, still earning!

UNFORGIVENESS

I LOVE the way they bury the dead,
Their faces free to Heaven—
Washed in the dewy light, and sped
Through fire to fragrance even!

But there was one, who prayed to lie
Face downwards—for God never
Had turned His face to him—and he
Faces the shades forever!

GRASS

LEGIONS of grass, yet not one spear the same—
Their stirring life withdrawn into themselves,
Sleeping the summer sleep, that ne'er has name—
Forgetful of the touch of all but elves;
Becalmed, as noontide seas of starry green,
When the sweet sun departs, they softly weep—
Dreaming of worlds, that we have never seen,
Forsaken worlds, that change the while they sleep;
Legions of grass, with magic powers untried,
And stranger grasses waiting in the sea—
Each drawn into the dream, he locks inside—
Wakened by winter's winds, to march and eye
Each other in a world, to them, I trow,
Paradise lost, but all around them now!

GOD'S HOUR-GLASS

Man is the Hour-glass of God —
And, grain by grain, his being flows
Out of the globe of surface shows
Into the globe below the sod:

Clear of the sunken sands of strife,
God turns below the Body's bowl —
And so upturns Man's crystal Soul
Brimmed with the golden grains of life!

POETRY

Look round thee! Everything upon the sod,
The unheard things, thou hast so often seen,
Whose sounds are like a symphony serene,
Is poetry, the common speech of God:
The stones, o'er which thou hast so hasty trod,
Are periods, that in them little mean
But for the flowers they are set between —
And all keep time to the Composer's rod!

So Poets are his favorites, for they
Appreciate and have his songs by heart —
Therefore beside his throne such courtiers stay;
Just to repeat his songs, have Poets given
Their lives and loves, and losing all have aye
Risen most lightly to the rarest Heaven!

DEATH IN CHURCH

THOUGH in the church, as one interred,
Mine eyes were sealed with shadow—
I never heard so sweet a bird,
Beyond so bright a window—

I never saw, like one at night,
Till, in the tomb-like door,
I found the whole world in the light
I loved, so long before!

ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

How lovely are the stars, when bravely bright
Each—like a sweet and sanctimonious nun,
Bent on her righteous way—doth softly run
Visiting, through the poverty of night:
But though immortal and of constant light,
Yet, when their mission beautiful is done,
Clustered behind the radiance of One,
They seem to vanish from the human sight!

O dear departed Souls! though mortal eye
No longer see you shining in the sky,
As when you lit the darkness of our dream—
Dissolved in Heaven's all-embracing day,
You do but hide in God your golden gleam
And live to shower love, though far away!

MY OCEAN

My waves are breaking on distant shores —
In beautiful lonely lights unseen —
Strange and still, golden and green,
Where billows roll melodious roars
And only my Soul has been!

My waves are breaking on distant shores —
And deep in my heart pink corals grow
And phantom monsters swim to and fro
Under the old ideal Azores,
Stars of my ocean O!

My waves are breaking on distant shores —
And the fishermen sail about on me,
And some draw food, and some no good —
Beware! light barque, of the darkling scars —
For I am an old and beautiful sea,
An old and beautiful sea!

FORGIVEN

Beside the surf I soon espied
A little castle, made of sand,
That seemed, with what conceit, to stand
Unmindful of the coming tide:

I watched the artless work of Man
Be gently buried by the sea;
And thanked God for the child in me —
That I should end, as I began!

MUSIC GOING HOME

The vale is crowding up with stars,
  And I am stealing home—
While everywhere the chirps and chirrs
  From secret cellars come!

The dusk is busy with applause,
  The crickets most rejoice—
And everything, that had to pause,
  Has found a cheering voice!

Oh! have I really come so near
  The risen shades of things—
So near the spirits, that I hear
  The music of their wings!

SHIELDED

I blew the candle out,
  And I was in the night—
  With one poor little light
Died all that was about!

I felt, how in my heart
  The light of life, my love,
  At one breath from above
Would flutter, and depart!

TRANSCENDENT REALITY

In the bosom of a cloud
I found a star!
Was it Joy in Sorrow's shroud—
Peace in War—
Love in Life—
The Soul Avowed?
Greater far—
In the bosom of a cloud
I found a star!

THE THREE SILENCES

Three silences there are, and only three:
The first is where no tongue hath ever been—
He is the phantom No-one, lurking in
Whole polar regions—sing, and he will flee!
The second is where tongue was wont to be—
A harmless ghost, this fair old man is seen
Hiding amid the ruin's silvery green,
Smiling in tears o'er sweet, dead Memory!

The third is where tongue is, but holdeth peace—
He dwelleth in us, here and 'neath the sod,
And terrifieth, for He judgeth all;
Such is the brooding silence of the Soul—
Such is the boding silence of our God:
Oh! pray these silences shall some day cease!

A BIRD'S MESSAGE

"To ME—for me—to me—for me,"
The meadow warbler sings;
"To me—for me—to me—for me,"
The hearty meadow rings!

Have I no echo to the song—
Not any note of praise?—
He bids me but to linger long,
Delighted all my days!

He bids me, to allow my land
Was made in love for me:
I hear, sweet bird, I understand—
"To me—for me—to me!"

SURFEIT

WHO sees the glory of the sun,
Till he is almost gone—
Who is awake, to gaze upon
The splendor of his dawn!

Alas! how much we miss of life—
How little we behold,
Who, in the noon's too sunny strife,
Were blinded by its gold!

TO ONE DEPARTED

A SLUMBER sank, like gentle rain,
  Upon her parching soul—
And, healing all the olden pain,
  It made her beauty whole!

How could she smile, before she trod
  Upon her starry sphere—
Did she not see the face of God,
  Or feel that He was near!

2.

Oh! Death serene— Hast thou no pain,
  No fear to be oppressed?
How sweet a smile! Is thy head lain
  Upon thy Lover's breast?
Oh! why that smile? Hast thou then seen
  The vision of thy God—
Or read, upon thy star serene,
  "No Heart Shall Be Downtrod!"

3.

So Angel-like in death,
So lovely and so light—
God must have sealed her breath,
By kissing her "Good Night"!

THE BROOK

'Tis always still, this holy dell,
'Tis always sombre here—
But the little brook, he singeth well
And sparkleth very clear!

He doth not care! he doth not care
For stick, or stone, or bed O—
He lets God lead him anywhere,
A singer in the shadow—

He lets God lead him anywhere,
So happy e'er he dieth ne'er—
And maketh his way most fair,
To run out on the meadow,
meadow,
To run out on the meadow!

IN DARKNESS

My star, all day so hidden,
To-night is shining free—
No more am I forbidden
My Brother-stars to see;

But now I gaze around me,
Enthroned within a dream,
To find the rest have found me
To be the star I seem!

WEDDED

Two Souls, that may not meet,
  But make a wider line
O'er seas, the Saviour's feet
  Have trod to marriage wine:

Earth's Parallels—too even
  To cross, or meet to sever—
Yet, being one in Heaven,
  With closer lives forever!

RAINDROPS ON THE LAKE

Like Raindrops, dancing on a dreamy lake,
Our souls—that were upgathered in the clouds,
Even as dust in tears—freshly awake
All of the waters round, each one enshrouds:
Then, rising quick to fullest height, some fall
And, spread out, grow invisibly as breath—
But true souls blow to bubbles bright, which all
Have complements beneath the surface, death:
Self-centered rings, of Sense and Action, sends
Each soul, but to embrace and influence far,
Until, its task fulfilled, the storming ends—
It sinks to sleep upon a silvery bar—
  Where, though in dimness long, it is not gone,
  Nor e'er destroyed—but, dreaming, all in one!

MY SOUL

I'LL be myself some day—
Some day
I'll be the way
I ought to be!
All that I should be,
Would be—
All that I say
I could be—
All that I may,
The true me!

Somehow, sometime, someplace,
God's grace
Shall show my face,
As eve a star!
On high, 'mid all our host—
Not lost,
Dimmed in the daylight race,
Not crossed—
My star in place
Forever!

TRANSUBSTANTIATION

LIFE eats the fruits of life—
And this is death—but then,
Transformed beyond belief,
The fruit is life again!

IF WE BUT KNEW

How many lips would kiss,
  If we but knew—
How many hearts in bliss,
  If we but knew!
The apple-blossoms come and go—
How many fall, how few may blow,
And oh! how red the apples grow,
  How few—how few!

Few hearts need love alone,
  If we but knew—
And none were made to moan,
  If we but knew!
But many a song is sung unheard,
And many a fire dies unstirred—
Yet Heaven would open to the word,
  If we but knew!

SHADOWS OF IMMORTALITY

While above me spreads thy shadow,
  Still thou livest, lost in light—
While about me rings thine echo,
  Still thou singest, o'er the night:

That a lark in sun is singing,
  Show the notes, he rains beneath—
That a Soul with God is winging,
  Shows her cast-off shadow, death!

THE SUN

WHO can brook the sun—
Double sun-spots rise;
All I see of death
Is two cinder eyes!

So, is death a sun—
Very light and life?
Death itself must be
Immortality!

CONCERNING A THING IN WHICH WE FEEL SOME HIDDEN WANT

O PHILOSOPHIC bubbles in the blue—
(Most too symmetrical to be of Man)
Floating, with little rainbows, o'er the span
And fainter, fainter chiming, coldly true—
In vain my groping ear has tried to woo
A solace from your unimpassioned ring—
Ye bright notes of a statue, could it sing,
Ye break upon my heart, a chilly dew!

Away! ye heartless spheres of Music Still,
Too highly pitched for mortal ear to thrill—
Ye borrow beauty from a higher light:
Strike forth! the singing sparks, that kindle might,
The martial music of undaunted will
And love triumphant—comets of the night!

GOD THE MARTYR

I, WHO have loved so many,
As many as I could see,
Nor held my love from any—
Ah, woe! ah, woe is me!

And that is why, whene'er I try
To think of God above,
With agony I scarce can cry—
For he—for he is Love!

CHANGE

LET us have change forever!
We hail it, sad or sweet—
That joys nor woes will ever
Lie long beneath our feet!
Though Change but changeth never,
He changeth e'er the chains—
That Life from death may sever,
Till but his Soul remains!

Up dawn! and send our onset,
Like sunbeams, on the plain—
Or fall! thy dying sunset
But leads us home again!
Let come the fleet to-morrows,
Godspeed the days that be—
For may both lights and shadows
Forever set us free!

LIFE FROM LOVE

As God begot in Love, his wife,
A Child Divine, a Son of Life —
To live and to be sacrificed —
All Men beget in Love their Christ!

For Life is born of Love alone —
And Life in Love begets a Son,
His Soul re-born, Himself to be
Love's life, Life's immortality!

YOUTH AND MAIDENHOOD

Upon the mount he stands, the perfect Youth,
Splendor on every inch and pride his spine —
Supreme, he sweeps the ocean all supine,
His spreading conquest — as he were, in truth,
The Dawn, the Dawn, whose eye, with forge-like breath,
Scatters the Hosts of Darkness! No decline
Mars that majestic Soul, that Dawn divine —
As it ascends, it triumphs over death!
And she, the perfect Maid — she leans on him,
As sweetness clothes her, like a satin dress —
Gazing with sunbeams, clouds make soft and dim,
Not down, but up, for He her conquest is;
Ah! She is Sunset, in her meltingness,
A pearl, that melts below the world's red brim!

BIRDS

O DAINTY bird, the daisies heard,
  Why art thou sitting there,
When summer aye has gone away
  And left thy home so bare;
The birds have flown, the breezes moan,
  The snow is everywhere,
And yonder sun will soon be down—
  Yet still thou sittest there!

Come! little bird—my room is warm,
  My hand shall thaw thy feet—
Come, fly in free! Come perch on me,
  And pick at what I eat!
The fire dances on the hearth—
  We'll have a meet most rare—
For thou shalt sing to me of earth,
  When all the earth was fair!

Alas! wee bird, and hast thou flown?
  Ah! why dost thou not know,
That I would bring thee to thine own,
  Because I love thee so!
Ah, me! so near, and yet so far—
  Poor silly bird, I see,
The closer Him, who lit my star,
  The more am I like thee!

IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD

I SEE the Dead! I see the Dead —
  The Living are unseen;
I see the spectrum overhead,
  But not the drops between!

I see what faces pass me by—
  The birds, the beasts, the whole,
Yes! even my fair Love—but I
  Have never seen a Soul!

NEW LIFE

ATLANTIC CITY! What a piebald show
Is hung upon the mind—yet there I stand,
Forgetting all, to see upon the strand
Four Indians—'tis not four lives ago:
What lies behind, I do not seem to know—
Wide marshes, far low woods, a boundless land
Untrod by White or Black! But hush! the band
See something white, at sea, it seems to grow!

O monstrous Change! Undreamt Futurity!
That little ship! and then this seething life
Covering all—so very suddenly?
O Ship ahoy! Whose flag is that, I see—
What crew, so potent to o'erspread this strife?
It comes! Behold! my Soul, the life to be!

RESURRECTION

Up from the sick-bed, out in the world,
Everywhere new and dew-impearled —
Ah God! how vainly I once drew breath!
Can it be like this after death?

THE LIFE OF THE DEW

Skyward, from the surging ocean,
See! the sun a dewdrop bears,
Where the winds, in light commotion,
Waft it upward everywheres—

Till the lonely, little prism
Falling, falling—finds repose
Folded in the fragrant bosom
Of a red, madonna-rose:

Barely in the Dewdrop's prison
Have the stars of Heaven burned,
Than the Dew again hath risen
And his fires, freed, returned!

So, from sea to sky to flower
And anon to sky again,
Dewdrops fall and rise forever—
Even as the Souls of Men!

THE UNDYING TRUTH

Not those, who lie, may suffer
As He, who bore his cross—
But he, who is Truth's lover,
May help Him, to his loss:

Behold! two Lies, both lying
Beside immortal Youth—
Both crucified, both dying—
But oh! their centre, Truth!

LOVE AND GROWTH

The dust is one, no dreaming can
Divide the mote from mote—
Children are still in love, but Man
In many clouds must float:

For lonelier as we older grow,
We grow by separation—
Till heart from heart, in tombs apart,
Return to one salvation—

Grown too apart, for heart to heart,
From men we must be children—
We must go downward, once again—
But oh! that will be heaven!

GHOSTS

Holding a shell, to kiss mine ear,
In its forsaken heart I hear
The strange, eventful whispers of the sea!

So, in the finite thing,
The shadows of infinity
Still sing!

THE SOUL'S VOICE

Her voice was like a violin,
  More mellow with the years—
And yet it never was a thing
  Of human hopes and fears;
Her voice was like a violin—
  And yet I never know
Whether I ever heard her sing,
  Or was it long ago?

WE SEE TOO LATE

How much we see of dying,
  How little of our growth;
We find we youths were lying
  On flower-beds of sloth—
Our eyelids vainly trying
  To rise on Childhood's lawn,
Where flames of sunset flying
  Are all is left of dawn!

BY THE SEA

I WENT down to the seashore,
And I said to the sea—
    Why dost thou keep on?
And the sea answered—
    "Why should I cease?"

And I was silent:
But then I answered—
    Is not perfect peace
    Better than vain endeavor?

Then the sea arose, and saith—
    "Why dost thou name my struggle vain?
    Hast stood by the sea in earliest times,
    Or watched the depths of the sea,
    Or the shores thereof?
Therefore be silent,
For it behooves thee well!"

A SAILOR'S KNOT

IF THOU and I both love the sea,
We love each other:
What I love is a part of me,
What Thou lov'st is the heart of thee—
If they are one, then Lovers we;
Thus I uncover—
If Thou and I both love the sea,
We love each other!

HEAVEN

When I wonder, like a child,
Earth is heavenly;
Earth will not again be wild,
Till we children be!

So the Poet, he will know that—
Like his Christ-child, Love—
Earth is swung, so he can see,
From the Tree above!

When shall all be fair and wild?
When ye wonder, like a child!
Children of the dust are we—
Death will make a child of me!

LIFE

The world is I, and all its history
Is played, for Heaven's court, upon my soul—
Not only as my past, but every day
A new interpretation of the whole!

THE WRITING AND THE READING

How rapidly, when I am dead,
My careful Life can all be read—
The drama of a century
Is but a sentence to his eye!

WONDER

Unless ye wonder, in simplicity,
No more shall any land be fair and wild—
Unless ye wonder, like a little child,
Verily Earth shall not be heavenly;
Unless in each its miracle ye see,
Not to the truth shall ye be reconciled—
Unless ye see its beauty undefiled,
Inviolate, God to you shall not be!

For he who hath no wonder in his heart,
No simple sight of God—as children have,
As poets, and as little saviour Love—
Shall not see Earth is swung from Heaven above,
Not being godly, nor a mirror, save
But for a moment, ere his life depart!

SIGNAL FIRES

Signal fires from the stars
Of thine eyes do I behold—
On the darkness, signs of gold—
On the silence, golden bars!

Is it love, or is it woe?
Speak! can we be lovers never?
Speak! before we part forever—
On my star must ever go!

MINE

Whate'er I see
Is a part of me—
  Fly! bird, to Heaven's goal —
My heart goes with you
Over the rainbow,
  That shines with all my soul!
Bear me above
The hills, I love,
  And over the sunny vales—
For I fain would see
What belongs to me,
  Ere the dear, old daylight pales!

A FOSSIL

Oh! see this fairy fossil;
I feel—as fancies jostle—
  As when, above a mummy,
  The Soul beholds his body!

Through myriads of ages—
By unremembered stages,
  But oft recalled by Nature—
  I reached my present stature;

For there will come a time, when
I fold my form, sublime then,
  A fossil in my palm—
  Or God's—for such I am!

GOD'S SHIELD

Blazoned upon God's shield, the sun,
Over his golden sword,
Seems now to flash, now melt thereon
The Watchword of the Lord!

The Word is on that shield—but one,
Yet every shake it saith,
As of a Trinity begun,
Now "Love"—now "Life"—now "Death!"

THE JUDGE

AN IMPROMPTU

Who is the Judge, above this argument,
Severing false and true, when two men speak—
Who is it that, when you or I invent,
Seems to approve what others call a freak?
He is not you, nor I, nor other men—
Ever unseen, and yet how truly felt—
But yet he seems to be, as we have been
Before some splendid sight, or happy lilt!
Perhaps it is the Soul of us decides
On everything around it, in our breast
Sitting in judgment, like the star that bides
Above the ancient battle in the west—
But, whereso'er he is, I oft have known
A God, that I could almost call my own!

FRAGMENTS OF ETERNITY

EACH time I stop, beside the way,
With Time himself to stay—
The sights, I barely see,
Seem fragments of Eternity!

THE NEVER-PRESENT PRESENT

WE LIVE where we are not—
Ever some other spot
  Is gleaming round us;
The Future and the Past
Are with us to the last,
  The lands that bound us!

The Present lives through them—
Upon its slender stem
  Our senses even
Spend all their fragrant worth
In gazing back at Earth
  And up at Heaven!

CHANGE

How seldom, in my vessel's mast,
  I spy its spirits strange—
The What-it-was through all the past,
Or What-it-will-be to the last,
  Nor can I see it change!

THE OPAL HEART

The light, that once was one,
Opened through the opal,
Breaks in seven flames,
Playing every tone:

When the light is gone,
Gone, too, is the opal:

When a blow reclaims
All His rainbow flashes,
She returns to ashes;
Yet, though she be shattered,
All the flames, He scattered,
Quite unscathed return,
Whence they came, as one!

HOPE

I love the Children—for I ken,
Children are the Hopes of Men!
Only the Hopes? Adieu! but then,
I have a Grandson—Hope again!

ELECTRICITY

If electricity is life,
And too much electricity is death—
Then to be strong is all this strife,
To stand the shock of that diviner breath!

A BRIGHT OLD SOUL

A BRIGHT old Soul—
Through whom the beauties of his birth
Still glow, like embers on the hearth—
Good Cheer to all!

Fantastic Shadows round him dance,
That but enhance
A face so bright,
As he doth pass—out of the night!

ON PRIDE

How long, O petty Man, how long wilt thou
Strut, almost blind, upon this heavenly way—
Irreverent of what the flowers say
And passing all these shrines without a bow!
Preposterous it is, proud weaklings, how
You disregard the power of God's sway—
What? fallen, even his helping hand would stay—
And, questioned, thrice his friendship disavow!

Come out with me to the meridian,
And view the solar system—grains of sand!
Tossed in the air from God's enfolding hand—
Look! What is that, revolving in the blue,
Small as a mote within the sky? Oh, Man!
Is THAT your mighty world! And where are you?

THE CALL

Tap, tap, tap upon the heart
On the heart of Youth—
"Let me in!" says Truth;
Rise! ere she depart:

Tap, tap, tap upon the heart—
'Tis the pulse of Time,
Truth's eternal rhyme,
Ere thou wilt upstart!

Good

JOY FROM SORROW

I BORROW joy from sorrow,
A rainbow from the rain—
If life were not in shadow,
My star would shine in vain!

THE BRAKE

How unapparently would whirl
The Wheel of Time, the melting sky,
But for the big black brakes, that hurl
The stars on high!

And so my time—how smooth and swift
My soul would spin, but for the brake—
But oh! stopped soul, the fount you lift,
The stars you make!

I AM FOR YOU

KNOW! Anyone at work, at play, at rest,
The meanest occupation, or the best—
No matter who—
I am for you!

ARTISTS

I AM the artist of my Soul;
May Love, behind me, lend me might
With Death's charcoal to outline all—
With shadows, features of the light!

STRANGERS

They knew Him not!—Ah! would I know,
  Were He to come again?
Indeed, He would not leave us so—
  He must be among Men!

Everyman shall be my guest—
  For it well may be,
Hidden in some stranger's breast,
  Christ is come to me!

THE GOOD IN WOE

Sorrows besiege the heart, to free the Soul;
Bolder the breach, the more eternal light
Breaks through the heart—where, having dreamed all night,
The Soul is woken with a kiss, her toll;
Sorrows besiege the heart, to take the Soul—
First tapping gently, then, with greater might,
Battering down each obstacle in sight,
Until, fast through the heart, the sunbeams roll!

Had we no woes, where had we victory;
Untried, how can we deem ourselves so bold,
That we can face our God and his decree!
Our claim to live again is from the strife,
For Souls grow warmer as their flesh grows cold—
And Death inflicts no greater wound than Life!

THE LIGHT-HOUSE

'Mid foaming billows, reared on high
The tall, white Light-house stands—
And flings his golden shafts, that fly
To distant silver strands!

Oh! how his isle, with jagged rocks
Like battle-axes, gleams—
That slash the waves' assailing shocks
And leer in wet moonbeams!

On that lone head the midnight storm
Showers unceasing hail—
While billows bound upon his form,
Lashed onward by the gale;

But none can bend his slender stem,
That flower of the sea—
No wave can reach his diadem,
Aflame with golden glee —

His tongue of flame its message tells,
Despite the roars of night—
As, o'er yon clanging buoy-bells,
His look outspeaks the light!

Alone the hero backward hurls
Each foe, each wave on wave—
Surrounded, yet undaunted, whirls
Defiance to the grave—

No ringing voice, no helping hand
  Is there to cheer him on—
Firm-footed on his star of land,
  Alone his battle's won:

Yet, like a pack of hungry wolves
  About their victim treed,
The billows lash and tear and gnash,
  Until their white fangs bleed:

For, as the brave Horatius fought
  His overwhelming foes,
So stands the Light-house, freely caught
  Upon his isle of woes—

Foregoing friends and joy and life,
  To light the stormy lea,
In lone, heroic, ceaseless strife
  To save a Soul at sea!

THE CROWN OF STRIFE

Oh, look! 'tis Christ, that bears his cross,
  He strove to be a god—
He gave his soul to save thy soul—
  By hundreds now downtrod!

Oh, look! 'tis Christ, borne by his cross!
  What has he lost—his life?
That failure is a god's success,
  For see his crown—'tis Strife!

CHRISTMAS IN THE HEART

Sorrow lies in the manger of my heart,
The hope of glory and the means of grace—
As Purity, his mother, shows his face,
Wisdom his fairest joys would fain impart:
How near him stands the humblest of the mart,
The sorry ass, still with his fallen trace—
Whom Sorrow's little arms would fain embrace,
Making him great, beyond the touch of Art!

Who knows where stands the heart, that shelters
Christ—
Whose but an Angel's starry eye divines
Beneath the earth the heavenly sun that shines?
I bare my head before the humblest cot—
Lest, hidden there, for me long sacrificed,
I pass my Saviour's home, yet know it not!

TO I. H.

Light as a feather from God's wing,
Thy Soul is blown but higher—
And fallen, where the flood-gates swing,
It rides the tides like fire—

Oh! how it floats upon the storm,
Dances over the fall!
God caught thee up, but to thy form
There clung no tear at all!

THE ASS

The ass's head is sunken low,
His eyes are almost closed—
He dreams, perhaps, of long ago,
When first his dam he nosed—

He dreams, perhaps, of fields and fords
And milk, the babe would draw—
But now his bed is made of boards,
His food his bedding straw!

And should he cry, a little while,
For hunger, thirst, or fear—
A hundred happy lips would smile,
A hundred throats would jeer!

No sound comes from the tired heart—
No struggle with its load—
No friendly voice arrests the mart
With, "Drop that bloody goad!"

No loving hand is on his neck—
No shoulder at the wheel!
He falls!—Thank God! For who will reck
That sorry coat could feel!

The humblest heart in all the throng—
The helper of us all—
The hero, with a jester's song,
Must give his heart and fall—

Not crowned with flowers from his wood,
But seem—as shunned, downtrod,
Most scorned by those, he does most good—
Forgotten by his God!

And he who gave, one Christmas morn,
The manger in his stall—
The Bearer of the Lord—has borne
The saddest life of all!

AT SEA

Hurried along by what imperious wind,
Shouldered by some strange surge of Destiny—
Like derelicts, adrift upon the sea,
Mayhap on sand to shelve, or rock to grind—
We put for anywhere, too much resigned
To patch the brave, torn sails of Liberty,
Pointing toward some port, before we lie
Becalmed, with cargoes due to Humankind!

Awake! Man, take the tiller! Time and space
Are but a fog, that swathes the impending shore—
My God! and wilt thou drown, forevermore,
On yonder hissing scar, in such disgrace—
Or steer, with firm hand, to the beaching place?
The rocks!—May God have mercy!—Still they snore!

THE EVERGREENS IN SNOW

The Forest sleeps beneath her quilt of snow—
How strangely beautiful, how soft and white;
Who could have thought, his boyhood Love could grow
So fair, he should not know her over night!
Hush! She is quite enchanted!—Steal in—see
Screen beyond screen of cloudy lace enorme:
Winter built this, though not with ivory—
Robing the details, to reveal the form!
But more surprise awaits thee! Peer inside
This Christmas-tree, that seems of sugar made—
Although the snow has bowed down all its pride,
'Tis green within—a little summer glade—
Oh, lovely sight! when years the beauty screen,
To find the aged heart an evergreen!

LOVE FROM SORROW

Love owes his life to sorrow—
But for the night's allay,
The love, that dawns to-morrow,
Would be an ash to-day!

The rose is burnt—a burst of rain
And she is bright and soft again—
Bright as my love—ah! but for woe,
Joy would have burnt it, long ago!

LABOR: A VESPER

Labor serveth God,
Be it given—
Sweat upon the sod
Is from Heaven!

Therefore, when my plough
Leaves the lea,
Dew, upon my brow,
Blesseth me!

ON RECEIPT OF THE SONNET ON HIS BLINDNESS

So! Thou art blind!—Ah! that is but as Love—
Blind to the face, but not the heart of things—
For still thy chalice of imaginings
Glows with thy pure communion above!
This! And thou blind? Nay! I know well enough
That one is never blind, the while he sings—
E'en now I see, above thy folding wings,
The peace of God, descending like a dove!

Blind? But they all are blind, who love us best—
They, who alone see God above their rest;
And Thou, yea! thou hast seen before thy time!
Thy lips have touched my lids—I see! I see
Thee, standing on the dawning mount sublime—
O Milton! Can'st thou reach thy hand to me?

YOUTH

You stand, Youth, on the cross-roads—
  There is no time to spare!
The road you came is closed to you—
  The middle ends nowhere!

Come! choose the right way, or the left—
  The sign-post's arms still tell,
A thousand miles to Heaven—
  A half a mile to Hell!

A VISION OF CONSCIENCE

I see a sheet of sun, a blinding light—
'Tis growing smaller, now more solid—it
Is now a golden throne, where still doth sit
A King—his hand suspends the day and night!
I see a man before him, who, in height,
In bristling hair, low brow, hard jaw, is fit
To be an ape! I see his teeth, and yet
Blood's on his hands!—Now he dissolves from sight!

How still the sunlit King sits on his throne—
Listen! I hear a step! There comes alone
A man in raiment white, with quiet tread:
His blue eyes meet the King's, his bosom throbs,
He falls and hides his face, shaken with sobs—
Yet, all the while, an halo crowns his head!

SONGS FROM A GARDEN

I. BREAKING

So MANY Hearts and seeds,
  Alike for Sowing's sake,
And yet—what flowers, what weeds—
  How differently they Break!

II. ROSES AND THORNS

Rose-bush! For many woes,
  I may not wisely mourn—
I see, the sweetest rose
  Must blossom from a Thorn!

III. FLOWERS FROM DUST

Out of the dust spring flowers—
  Out of the midnight morn—
Out of my old, dark hours
  Beauty may be born!

IV. EARTH AND DEW

Were I not buried in the earth,
  My Soul could never grow—
My Soul could have no higher birth,
  Were I not born below!

The little flower, near that nest,
  Would not be half so dear—

Were she not clasping, to her breast,
So heavenly a tear!

V. FLOWER AND STAR

I love a little flower,
Far more than any star—
She has so little power,
Nor does she live afar:

For Love to me is even—
Yes! like herself—more sweet
Not shining down, from Heaven,
But upward, at my feet:

Oh! Love is not a star, ablaze
Above the poor, at night—
But brave as this young rose, to raise
Her face, through dust to light!

VI. A FLOWER

Not for herself, this flower—
She looks at me with love—
Trying, with all her power,
To lift her face above!

O happy little soul,
So perfect from thy birth—
Love is, however small,
The sweetest thing on earth!

VII. FLOWER OF LIFE

Bravest of all the brave,
  Beautiful Flower—
Bright by the darkling grave
  Blooming thine hour—
Oh! how thy heart, most high,
Dauntless, stands forth to die,
Far from a friendly eye,
  Poorest in power!

Helpless, a slave to Death,
  In his arms failing,
Breath'st thou thy last sweet breath,
  Shivering, paling—
Fair, with thy dewy eyes
Fixed on the happy skies,
Where not a cloud replies,
  Heedlessly sailing!

Hail! little Heart-of-gold,
  Stemming the strife—
Hail to thee! Sweet-of-old,
  Worthy God's wife—
Still on the waste of years,
Star thou our darkest fears,
Smiling through all thy tears—
  Flower of Life!

VIII. THE BRAVERY OF FLOWERS

How brave ye bloom, dear flowers,
  Though no one see, nor love you—
Though fair, too fair for powers
  To stem the blast above you!

O Lives, dear Lives in hiding—
  Helpless, yet brave and sweet—
I smell your incense, rising
  From Death's empurpled feet!

IX. TO DAISY

Little sister, wilt thou be
Like the daisy, under thee—
Keep thine eye upon the sky,
  Where such stars are given;
Daisies cannot ever see
Till their golden hearts are free—
Never fly upon the lea,
  Lift they not to Heaven!

Then, if thou would'st bloom, thou must
Rise from darkness and from dust—
Till thy lovely head is thrust,
  Star-like, o'er the sod;
For, along the field, will pass
One, who looks for loveliness—
One, who loves a little lass!
  Is it me—or God?

X. A LEGEND OF FLOWERS

When Earth was like a star, with tongues of flame—
Then spake the Lord, and from his eyes the dew
Fell on her face, like words both kind and true,
The tears, that should remind us of his name;
For each a timeless jewel then became,
In taking from its meaning form and hue—
Bits of a broken rainbow—gems, that knew
Love's light without his heat, nor any blame:

Now, when each gem was mirroring his wife,
Their frozen hearts caught fire, brimmed with life
Till gems broke into flowers—white, blue, gold—
Then rubies became roses, sweet of breath;
Alas! What burns, burns out—so life brought death—
The flowers died, but rose a thousandfold!

XI. AND SOME FELL UPON STONY PLACES

I planted upon stony soil
A rosebud from my heart—
And, tending it with faithful toil,
I watched for it to start:

O barren soil, O thankless toil—
My little rose no more—
Where thou wert born is now a thorn,
I never saw before!

XII. THE IVY AND THE WALL

High, as she hath a guidance and support,
The Ivy climbs—the Ivy ever slim—
Clasping the old gray wall, in childish sport,
As if he needed her to mother him!
And, with her constant little flutterings,
Her clapping hands, she seems to make him smile,
Until his hard old heart within him rings—
Although he looks quite cold and stiff the while!
And He? He loves the ivy! Do but think
What he would be without her—worn and gray!
And She?—The world has not a stronger link—
For she must cling to him, or die away!
Oh! to be loved and love like that—dear wife—
The Ivy and the Wall of human life!

XIII. LOVE AND SORROW

Love is beautiful in sorrow—
Violets, her lifted eyes,
Melting in the midnight, borrow
Little stars from Paradise!

What is fairer than a lily,
  Lonely, praying for the sun?
Love is fairer than a lily,
  When the day of Love is done!

Roses wither very early—
  Roses blossom just as soon;
Tears of dew are, like a rosary,
  Told in Heaven, ere the noon!
Who shall keep the vestal fires
  Starring yonder holy height?
Only Sorrow till to-morrow,
  Only Shadows till the Light!

XIV. THE DIVINE ROSE-BUSH

There is a rose-bush waits for thee
  Somewhere—somewhere!
And many a thorn protects that tree—
  Take care! Beware!
But he, who is brave, will try discover
That bush, though he trudge the whole world
  over!

For the rose-bush, it hath roses three—
  'Tis rare! 'Tis rare!
Crimson, snowy, and gold they be—
  How fair—how fair!
And if thou would'st own that bush divine,
Then pluck all three, and the bush is thine!

For the snowy rose is the stainless mind—
(Not yet! not yet!)
And the crimson rose is the heart, that glows—
But never! never forget
To pluck the golden rose of the soul,
Or lost the bush and alas! the whole!

XV. SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

My flower, thou'rt ever a little thing—
My love, thou hast few hours;
In the horizon of a wedding ring
God has designed his flowers!

XVI. 'TIS MINE TO SMILE OR MOURN

There is a woe in every joy—
In every rose, a tear—
There's dust upon each butterfly,
That bursts his prison here:

But there's a joy in every woe—
A sap in every thorn—
A light in every tear—and so
'Tis mine to smile or mourn!

XVII. THE DIVINE DESPAIR

Oh! little perfect flower,
Beautiful child of Love—
I am a sunset Hour,

Sobbing the dew above—
Sobbing with heart nigh broken
Over thy form, too fair,
The music of loves unspoken,
The song of a Soul's despair!

Far little star of beauty,
Angel of saintly love!
If it be Earth's dark duty
Stars in the sky to prove—
Oh! be my tears thy dower,
Tears that we are apart—
For Thou art a perfect flower,
And I but a human heart!

XVIII. A BLUEBELL

Little bluebell, little bluebell,
I want to be like thee—
I want to live out on a cliff
Beside the sunny sea;
How sweet to ring at brush of wing
And feel it set me free—
Little bluebell, little bluebell,
I want to be like thee!

Perfect bluebell, simple bluebell,
Were I as sweet and true,
The secret beauty of my soul
Would let all heaven through—

My Spirit wild would be a child,
His sacrament the dew—
And everyone would love me,
As if I never grew!

Fairies' chalice, heavenly heart,
I found, within thy cup,
A sorrow, wept from Paradise,
And knelt to kiss it up;
O miracle most beautiful!
I sprang up with a cry—
For, sweetened in thy honeyed heart,
The sorrow was a joy!

Little flower, little martyr,
I would the world would drain
The tears, that sweeten in my cup,
Before they rose again:
Perhaps thy bloom and faint perfume
Some Bible shall imbue—
Flaming flower, little martyr,
Thy faith thou shalt not rue!

Perfect flower, perfect flower,
As sweet in rain as sun—
Firm rooted, but above all soil—
A joy to everyone—
How beauteously thy Spirit moulds
The dust, from which we start,
Now shining through the clouds, that thou
Drawest from out my heart!

Little bluebell, little poet,
Unto thyself how true—
What breeze will bear thy brood abroad,
Where will they blossom, too:
Little bluebell, little true-tell,
I wonder could it be—
That love could make my heart to live,
By merely loving thee?

Holy bluebell, fairy church-bell,
I wonder, dost thou ring
Over a land, none understand,
What time the wind doth swing—
And dost thou call both great and small,
Though great ones hear thee not,
The bee to his confessional
Within that lovely spot?

Vain Fancy! beautiful, but vain—
I know thee, as of old—
But still believe thou art more sane
Than any yet hath told—
My youth is bound to thee, and I
Will hold thee in my heart—
But such things are too fair to see,
Too lovely to impart!

But tell me, little bluebell,
(Thy beauty ringeth true!)
Thou heavenliest of flowers,
Bravest and sweetest too—
Can'st thou, then, let God make thee
So fully to his will,
That never breeze can break thee,
Nor ever showers spill?

Enough! I will not pray thee,
To tell me what I know—
Thy wisdom will not stay me,
Although I love thee so;
My heart within is like thee,
For all my body's woe—
I pray but thou wilt take me
Wherever thou dost go!

Little bluebell, little fare-well,
I would my heart were laid
Within thy snowy roots' embrace,
Beneath thy face for shade;
By thee, my flower soul would rise—
Two loves, that could not sever—
Two loves, that make one Paradise
Forever and forever!

XIX. THE GARDEN

Hold not thy garden as a little thing,
Here is the sky in winter as in spring—
For it belongs to God, whose Son thou art,
Tending his garden, as it were thy heart,
Having the stars for its own counterpart,
The birds, the brooks, the fields and everything!

XX. A VIOLET

O little, saintly flower,
  Mysterious Violet—
Veiled in an emerald bower,
  With diamonds still wet—
Thou art a wondrous dower
  From Him, who loves us yet!

How shadowy, yet glowing—
  How luminous, yet lush!
What Fairy has been throwing
  Her censer by the bush—
An amethyst, that blowing
  Took oriental blush?

The Spirit of thy petal,
  That in thy smile I trace—
(Whose starlight is the metal,
  That knows nor time, nor place)—
Must curl, ere she may settle,
  So shy is she of grace!

Thy heart, a censer golden,
Is shedding silver rays—
But, though it may embolden
Me with desire's craze,
To thee am I beholden
For bettering my ways!

Ah, surely thou art royal,
Robed in that purple gown;
Let him, whose heart is loyal,
For love of God, kneel down
And, child-like, to enjoy all
The good, that He has sown!

Thou little piece of heaven,
With but a star for heart,
With saddest moonbeams paven
Around the sweetest part—
Wept over by leaflets seven—
Such, Violet, thou art!

XXI. A ROSEBUD

Look how the rose, beshadowed by old Fate,
Shrinks from the touch of her adoring June—
Seeing him lift her crown of frost, too late,
And Winter come, to seal it on too soon:
Look how the tear, that stars her shadowy eye,
Shoots to the pollen of her golden heart,
Tempering its star-dust with the salty sea—
Of dreams the last, of married day the start!
But, as the gold arms of her phantom sun
Gird her with great and ever new delight,
She spreads her roseleaves, where his blushes run,
Shutting his image in her heart, all night!
In heaven is the world remembered not,
Until their saviour, Sorrow, is begot!

XXII. THE RAIN

I. THE SUN DRAWING RAIN

Have you seen the heaven
Drawing tears from earth?
They shall soon be given
Back to her, for mirth:
Sunshine breaking,
Flowers waking—
That is what comes after
Tears were taken,
To be shaken
Into laughter!

II. THE RAIN

The rain is the child of sorrows—
  Redemption comes through him!
Hast thou not seen the willows
  Sparkling in every limb?

The rain is the child of sorrows—
  Who, after days of joy,
Comes o'er the burning billows,
  Comes that we may not die!

After the rain, the earth is
  How fair, how undefiled—
A virgin still, though birth has
  From Heaven upon her smiled;

How through her tears she glances,
  Smiling at her mishap—
As she was she, who dances
  Her Saviour on her lap!

But when the cloud has parted,
  The child of sorrow goes—
More fair than when she started,
  Opens the sparkling rose—

And, when the cloud has parted
  And child of sorrows gone,
Fair is the arch, that started
  In triumph to the sun!

III. AFTER THE RAIN

After rain
Comes sunshine—
What was pain
Is divine;

After rain,
See the rose—
With her woes
Changed to wine!

Did the sky
Never rain,
Roses by
He would drain—

Did the Soul
Never cry,
Soon his bowl
Would be dry!

XXIII. AMONG THE DAISIES

A day far, far away, my Love and I
By an old fence were gazing o'er the hills—
Hushed in the singing of the little rills,
That ran about our mead so merrily;
A sigh of happiness flew softly by
On windy wings, that set the daisies' frills
Streaming, till thousands laughed—then, as when fills
The dome with song, the Angel Love stood nigh!

A thousand suns for me shall never set—
A thousand maiden daisies heavenward gaze
In sweetest adoration; and, when days
Of desolation draw me round, nor yet
Shall I refrain to haunt the old sweet ways
Where myriad daisies shone—nor I regret!

XXIV. THE STAR IN THE DEW

The flower dreameth;
Above her beameth
  Down through the darkness far—
Though bound apart—
In her dewdrop heart
  The image of him, her star!

The flower waketh,
As nurse wind shaketh
  The dew from her dreamy eyes;
Her love she embraceth,
But only faceth
  The light of the morning skies!

XXV. RED ROSE OR WHITE

Red rose or white —
Red rose or white?
  Give me the red rose,
  Just for to-night!

White rose or red—
White rose or red?
  Give me the white rose,
  Her would I wed!

XXVI. HEAVEN'S ANSWER

Earth prayed to Dawn—"Oh! send me a spark,
  A mirror for thy blushes—
My heart is withered, I am dark
  As those old briar bushes!"

It rained—and lo! the rose, like morn,
  Was dawning soft and clear;
It rained—and every ashen thorn
  Was jeweled with a tear!

XXVII. THE BEAUTY OF MORTALITY

Give me no rose immortal,
With diamonds for dew,
Before a golden portal
At Heaven's bastion blue—
Give me no rose immortal,
That ever is the same,
Colder than Heaven's portal,
Prouder than lasting fame—

But oh! a rose, most human,
As tender as a dove,
As beautiful as woman
And brave and sweet as Love:
Her little rosebud even,
That blossomed yesterday—
More lovely now in Heaven,
That he could fly away!

XXVIII. VERSE WITH FLOWERS

These children of my garden
Have left this world of care—
To blossom at thy bosom
And fade in Heaven, there!

XXIX. A WILD ROSE

Oh! fairer than a rose,
That in my garden grows,
  Dearer than Heaven's starry chalice—
Lies in the vale below
A lowly love I know,
  That makes a poor man's home his palace!

Not as the lusty rose,
That some proud lady chose,
  Leaning a-staff, by stone wall sharded—
That love is wild to-day,
A rose beside the way,
  Beaten by rain, by few regarded!

Yet still it blooms and blooms,
Sending its sweet perfumes
  To all, as homeward they go by it—
Cheering them on their path,
To know its dust still hath
  Such flowers of God's love so nigh it!

XXX. A BLUE VIOLET

Pray tell me, little blue-eyed nun,
  Why dost thou kneel in grief—
When thy sweet life is o'er too soon,
  To mourn each falling leaf?
Before the frost thy spirit goes—
  But I must live, to see
The moon of woes display the snows,
  That bury all but me!

Why art thou cloistered from the blast,
  Nor have to leave thy home—
When I, before the creaking mast,
  Am driven like the foam?
Thy dying prayer for Heaven's wine
  Is answered by the dew—
But I, who pine for springs divine,
  Must search the desert through!

May I not dwell, in sweet content,
  Within thy dewy nook,
Thy cloister fair, where ever chant
  The angels of the brook?
Thine eyes are bright with dew for me,
  But mine are bright with tears—
Yet still I hope, to rise, like thee,
  Out of the dust of years!

XXXI. A GOLDEN ROSE

The rose, that loves her star so—
  The mortal the divine—
That rose doth like her star grow
  And, like her lover, shine:

Though sunshine burn at stake, here,
  No shade her star alarms—
For then his rose shall break, there,
  Out of his golden arms!

XXXII. THE COLOR OF FLOWERS

A flower but reflects His light,
  One of His shades—while all the rest,
  Breathed deep into her billowy breast,
Fill her with fragrance and delight—
  It is the shade, she loves the best,
The shade denied her in the night,
When dews have made her eyes so bright,
  Dreaming of daylight's sweet behest!

I love the body's vesture, hemmed
  About the soul, that grows so dim—
  In that I walk, with every limb
By all the joys of day begemmed:
  His sunset, from my bosom's brim,
Draws seven shades; tear-diademmed,
Then, like a flower—were I not stemmed,
  In sleep, my soul would float to Him!

XXXIII. TO A ROSE

Princess Rose, with heart of gold,
Robed in red—thy soldier Thorn
Hedge thee from the Fairies bold,
Hold thee up, to kiss the Morn,
  Who, thy King and Father too,
  Flings thee diamonds of dew!

Ruby cup, where one dew-pearl
Melts, like love within my heart—
Rose, whose burning lips must curl
In Love's chalice—Rose, who art
  Dawn and sunset to an Elf,
  Drink me dew—I'll drink thyself!

Oh! I caught thee, maiden wild,
Playing with the roving wind—
Truant princess! like a child
Swaying, in his arms reclined,
  Though how many blades of grass
  Bow to thee, thou royal Lass!

Cherub breezes kiss thy cheek,
Kindling all thy modesty;
Hark! the feathered angels speak
Woodland hymns, in praise of thee—
  "Never, never shalt thou die,
  O Madonna of our Joy!"

Dost thou flirt with butterflies,
Selling honey—do thy grasses
Whisper of the breezes lies,
That they elbow through for kisses?
  Let them 'ware—the arrows fly
  From the bow above thine eye!

O thou lamp of orient light—
When is lost that Sinbad, bee—
Dost thou guide him home at night,
Like a light-house by a sea;
  As, against thy rosy glass,
  Do the birds beat on thee, Lass?

Never poem's melody
Hath a sweeter message told—
Never hath a symphony,
Woven upon strings of gold,
  Kindled more responsive glows
  Of God's presence, than a rose!

XXXIV. A ROSE'S HEART

The rose hath a heart of gold—
  (For the rose must die, too soon)
And her heart of gold is never old—
  She blooms in the newborn June;
She blooms in the newborn June
  On the brae of the long, white way—
For the heart of gold shall bloom, as of old,
  When the rose hath passed away!

XXXV. THE BURNING BUSH

O morning rose! . . . Oh! hush . . .
With naked feet I tread,
To hear—my heart, so red—
God in the burning bush!

Hail! I have heard thy word—
Hail! I have seen thy law—
But Lord, of all I saw,
How can I sing a third!

XXXVI. THREE LITTLE BLUEBELLS

Three little bluebells, in rainy weather,
Their beads of dew did tell:
When two or three are gathered together,
God will not ring their knell!

XXXVII. FLOWER-BED

Flower-bed
Of little graves,
At each head
Their little staves!

What wilt thou rise?
Let me see—
"Here lies
Lily!"

DAILY THE TRAGEDY DIVINE

I. SUNSET

Down the deserted meadows
  Bearing his cross, with blood,
  The sinking sun hath trod,
Before a mob of shadows—

Who gathering, growing bolder,
  Now set him on the hill—
  While all the sky grows still
And all the earth grows colder!

II. DAWN

The cloud is like a stone,
  That, from the tomb of night,
Now rolls away alone—
  As angels of the light

Flash out, on either side—
  Frighting the shades, that run
Like shrunken hordes, to hide
  Before the rising sun!

THE TUNING

Joy can spring from sorrow only—
Who shall sing to me again,
Sound my heart, when I am lonely,
Ere the strain, its tuning strain!

A PSALM

O God! On this altar I lay
  A broken and a contrite heart;
Pardon of thee I will not pray—
  I know how vile my part!
I hate myself—
But I love thee;
Then strike me dead—avenged I'd have thee be!

O Love! As a poor man, who loves
  A queen of beauty, goodness, truth—
Prays but to kneel, nor him hope moves
  To even hope for ruth—
So, even when
Reproaching thee,
I was thy Lover then, and e'er shall be!

O God! Not forgiveness I ask—
  But strength, to smile beneath my woe—
Time, to construct thy noble task
  And pay the debt, I owe:
O God! if naught
Will plead for me,
Hold me not wholly bad, for One loved me!

KING SORROW

I HAVE served Sorrow, as a poor Fool should,
  Turning the other cheek, when blushes fled—
Turning his royal baitings into good—
  Laughed at his frowns, and crowned his surly head!

TO ONE WHO COMETH FROM THE HOLY LAND

To One, who cometh from the Holy Land,
I speak; and, as I speak, what visions rise,
Like incense from an ancient sacrifice,
Spirits of all that great, prophetic band:
Judea! 'twas thy glory, to command
The march of all the ages to the skies;
Awake Judea! for my blood replies,
That still I feel the glory of thy hand!

Ages are gone; thy ruins crumbling lie
Far in the rosy country of the dawn,
Forsaken by thy people—oh! but why?
Thou Lily-of-the-field, wert thou, lost gem,
Borne over oceans, on the wind and sun,
To be my star, my star of Bethlehem?

TO ROSE

My Rose, O Thou, who dost restore
Youth, to my failing sight —
Virgin, through whom I still adore
God's sweetness and his light—

Let fall on me thy latest beams,
Rose Window of the night—
Thou cold, sweet Angel of my dreams—
Where Thou art, all is light!

BEFORE THE BROOK

O PURE and lovely brook, that walks so piously
along!
May I not learn, most perfect nun, thy rosary
of song—
Whence dost thou come, and whither go, so
purposeful and free,
In perfect peace unquestioning thy wedding
with the sea?

(Though often spying on the brook, I never
clearly heard
The vespers of her dreamy song—but now I
caught each word)—
"For ages, have my wavelets sung this song, to
this refrain—
For ages, as they kissed these stones, to never
come again!

"Each tiny drop of water rushes onward to the
sea—
It never stops to look behind, nor asks what is
to be;
It seems to know just where to go, and straight-
way rushes on,
Careless of all, who come there, dependent upon
none!

"But, as the little dewdrops, like children at
their play,
Work on, without a single stop, carolling care
away —
Each helps the other drop along, blending her
song with his—
And so they seem to be one stream, with but
one song of bliss!

"We know not whence we come, nor go, nor can
retrace our steps—
Yet onward o'er the stones must flow, in dark
and sunny depths—
But, resting truly in our God, we trust that we
shall be
Borne onward, in one singing stream, to Him,
who is our sea!"

LADY OF SORROWS

God brings me low with Sorrow,
That darkness over me
Shall send me dreams of morrow
From every star I see—

That, when my woes are over,
My Soul may rise, at morn,
May leave life, as a mother
The bed, where Joy was born!

THE FIR-TREE AND THE PALM

Stand me like the fir-tree,
Green above the snows—
Where the sun, at last free,
Sheds his cape of rose—
Where, like Alpine soldiers,
Stand we to the blast,
Shoulders touching shoulders,
Singing to the last!

Not a sorry palm-tree,
Standing sentinel
In the desert daily
O'er his secret well—
Yet, if one I must be,
Who, but Saints, can tell
Whom my shade may shelter
In deserted hell!

WERE THINGS NOT AS THEY ARE

What to me is sorrow
Is another's joy—
What I want to borrow
Is another's toy;

Stars are given darkness,
Shadows given day—
Would we know their likeness
Any other way!

A CRIPPLE

Poor in the body, even unto debt,
But fortified with spiritual powers,
He turns to good, whatever pour the hours,
Disarming fortune, more than fairly met
By his indomitable cheer—nay! let
Him weep, 'tis only one of his sun-showers—
He seems the brighter for his woes, like flowers,
Which smile the more, the more their eyes are wet!

See! there he goes on crutches, crudely built,
Skipping with jollity, a whistling boy;
Ye Gods! he turns his crutch into a stilt—
A thing on which to rise, to speed the stride,
To play with, ho! to ford this rushing tide—
O Bravery, God gives to each his joy!

TO DISPARAGEMENT

With random visions fair, that I am right—
With constant real sights, that I am wrong—
With faith and love forever burning bright,
My star keeps marching to its spirit's song!

What though I may dispel but little gloam,
And many larger stars around me roll—
Enough! that I may guide some vessel home—
Enough! the glory of a quenchless soul!

MY WINDOW

THERE is a window in my life,
  Through which I look on Paradise—
Ah! who but thee, my lovely wife,
  My window to the skies—
    For, when thou art not here, I find
    That time hath drawn my only blind!

But, when thou art before me, Dear,
  I feel a window, open wide—
Through which, into my lonely lair,
  Streameth a sparkling tide
    Of scents, that tell of fields afar
    And songs of many a wandering star!

And that is why I love thee so,
  My only window to the skies—
Without thee I am blind, I know,
  And deaf to Paradise—
    Oh! all these beauties, outside me,
    I see, and hear, and touch through thee;
      God bless thee!

A MOUNTAINEER

WHAT makes yon mountaineer
  So hale and hearty?
It is the hills, my Dear,
The hard old hills, I fear,
That make yon mountaineer
    Worth a party!

THE ETERNAL HUMAN

A THOUSAND times, have I foresworn the dominance of sin—
A thousand times, though beaten down, will I arise again;
Though charge the wildest armies, and charging tramp me o'er,
They shall not see the morn, when I arise to fight no more!

Each time I rise, their victory is held by me for nought—
Each time I rise, I rise yet free, however dearly bought;
Nor far the day, when I shall link that sunny coat of mail,
From which whatever lance must glance, making its bearer quail!

A victory is never won, except from vanquished lips—
And though we fall, a thousand times, we still may mount the steps;
The glory of Mankind is hope, unconquerable hope—
And greatest is that conquest, for which we hardest cope!

THE LAST LAUREL

WHAT have I won my laurels for?
Was it for them alone—
Was it to feel, that I was more
Than you, or anyone?

Perhaps, in the frenzied foot-race,
I cared not for those, who fell;
Perhaps, I thought that the cup, once caught,
Was a prize, that none would sell!

But now, in the night-time, comrades,
I cry to the vanquished of me,
Here! take my old, old cup of gold—
'Tis empty! unless ye love me!

LOVE IN DEATH

IF DEATH be night and love be light,
Shall love endure in beauty's flight?
Still, out her stars, her soul plays bright—
Love hath always loved the night!

THE END AND THE BEGINNING

O BLIND, old Harper!—Art thou played out—
Have all thy Lovers left thee lorn?—
Friend! When all the stars fade out,
Look for the Morn!

WORTHINESS

All ye, who love, are worthy to be loved—
But he, who loves not, is not worthy of it—
For who has been, or who shall be above it,
Since God loves all, and so our God is proved:
As I may love, am I from dust removed—
As God may love, is he a God to me;
Love is the measure of divinity,
And makes his own strong Heaven, starry grooved!

Not worthy to be loved? Oh! say not so;
Nobler than I then Thou—for this I know,
As the soul loves, so lives that soul with God:
What better has this lonely world to give,
Than to be loved and, loving, learn to live—
Who else, who else but Love, can bear the sod!

THE RAINBOW

Send me seven sorrows,
For my seven sins—
As the shower borrows,
When the light begins—

Seven shades of Sorrow—
So that I may shine
Even as a rainbow,
Out of light divine!

THE SPARROW-HAWK

The sparrow-hawk is like an arrow-head,
His beak is like a finger, crook'd to cling—
His head and neck are like a fist and wrist,
And like a scimitar his wing!

How rigidly he cuts his even course—
As level as a skiff upon a lake—
Certain his movements, calculated, terse
As those an ordered army take!

His will is undivided, and he cares
Nothing at all, but for himself and mate—
Neither repents, nor prays, nor ever shares
The passions that, unfed, abate!

How silently, yet how portentously
He skims—a shadow in the sunny air—
Above the birds, that sing so carelessly,
For they . . . they know not He is there!

He drops! (My heart drops with him to the sod—
But now—I am the bird, his talons tore!)
The larks sing on, the field is . . . oh! my God . . .
The whole, wide world is as before!

AFTER THE RAIN

When the rain has fallen
  Gently from the skies—
Twilight lingers, as when
  Plaintive music dies;
  Then, with scent and bright surprise,
Musty woods are sweetened—
  Laughing, now, the flowers' eyes—
Nesting winds are fleetened!

When the tears have fallen
  Softly from my Soul—
Still I seem as callen
  By some vesper-toll;
  Then, as from a christening bowl,
Freshly am I risen—
  Hope and love, like incense, roll
From my Spirit's prison!

THE WEDDING GARMENT

Dress in pleasant thoughts—
  Some, in gloam,
Feel, at Heaven's feast,
  Not at home!

Dress in pleasant thoughts—
  Heaven's host
Bids, who live the best,
  Not a ghost!

JOY AND SORROW

I

A LITTLE star is shining bright,
  Because it shines from shadow—
A little joy is all delight,
  Because it comes from sorrow:
And both are really pleasanter,
  Because they pass away—
Because they go, to minister
  Unto the coming day!

II

I listened to a little bird
  Upon a leafy bough;
He never thought, that one, who heard,
  Would hear him singing now—
He never thought, his song would die,
  Nor sang a minor strain—
He sung of joy, and that is why
  He sung his song again!

III

Among her thorns a blushing rose,
  As beautiful as Love—
As Love, among a thousand woes—
  Drew down a boy above;
Because she was so perilous,
  He wanted her the more—
And, when she bled his hand, he said,
  Thou'rt rosier than before!

FORTITUDE

THE bravest man was he, who bore with charity
our woes—
Come! tyrant Woe, if thou wilt crush the
perfume from the rose—
For, bent beneath thy crossing heel, my flower
in its pain
Shall scent the winds with incense, and sweeten
life again!

The Pessimist is but a bat, that flies but in the
night—
And that is but God's shadow, who turns his
face from light!
But why gaze on my shadow, why not face
about and glow,
To see the castle of the sun withstand the clouds
below?

In every battle, many a hero foots in rank and
file—
Unnoticed, unadorned, he marches onward,
mile on mile—
Till Death may bring his small despatch of
Honorable Discharge,
Discharge of Soul from body, and the prisoner
at large!

The harder climb, the higher hill, from which
we may look down—
Come! up the highest hill of all, the floods can
never drown;
Reared on its topmost peak, our flag of
Fortitude shall wave
And laugh to scorn, left far below, the woes,
that would enslave!

Look! Up yon heap of Martyrs flames the
happiness of Man—
Up those dark steps hath mounted Life, since
ever time began!
Then hail! thou light-house, Fortitude, star
thou our stormy sea
And hurl back wave on wave from thy rock
base, Eternity!

THE KINGBIRD AND THE CROW

Above the big, black crow
In shameful flight—
The tiny kingbird so
Displays his might:

The while he guides his wings,
Is not alarmed,
And keeps above such things—
He can't be harmed!

A LONE STAR

A LONE Star,
In eternal and singular splendor,
Lost in the light of Day,
Burns unknown—

Shines in vain
Ever and ever—
But shines
Forever!

TO A CHILD

O BEAUTIFUL and strange inhabitant
Of childhood's Wonderlands of flowers and fays,
Where now thy face, the morning's dewdrop, plays
A little rainbow of its love, aslant—
Such lively joy I ne'er beheld, I grant,
Such dancing and such laughter! Have thy days
No colors from the brush of worldly ways—
No scarlet, sallow, gray—none dissonant?

Thou little Bluebell! simple, happy, free,
How beautiful is all thy world to thee—
A world of sleepy clouds in tender skies—
Too heavenly! it melts before mine eyes—
For, exiled, I shall ne'er return to be
A little citizen of Paradise!

IT'S ALL IN THE HEART

1.

Way out in the fresh young fields of May,
Where birds are busy and brooks at play—
I am the one, dark spot to-day!

They care not, if I do as they—
If I come, or if I stay—
Nor if I must pass away!

2.

Out in the clashing waters dark,
Lost and tossed in my tiny bark—
My dancing lamp is the only spark!

I float in faith—it is the ark—
And trusting God and his billows, hark!
My heart sings sweeter than any lark!

3.

When the fields were gay, I became as they;
When I sang at sea, it was soon like me;
My world is an art—it's all in the heart!

THE COMPASS

North, South, East, West are bound as
By one grief and one loss—
When first I saw the Compass,
I found it was a Cross!

THE COMPANION

My steps are not alone—
Oh! all the way hath gone
  Some one beside me;
And as, before, He staid—
He shall be mine, for aid,
  Whate'er betide me!

So, as we march along,
I learn to sing His song,
  Making me braver;
Until—when I can see
'Twas Death, that marched with me—
  I know my Saviour!

HARP OF THE HEART

Were not the strings in strain—
Were not the heart in pain,
  The winds of music, breathing through,
  Would ne'er wake melodies in you,
  No songs of joy, no beauties true,
But discords, discords o'er again!
Were not the strings in strain,
How sad the low refrain—
  The broken harp were hung along
  The walls, now silent unto song,
  Where only ghosts of Memories throng
In vain—in vain!

A LITTLE RESURRECTION

My HEART is dead!—What more?—I cannot moan—
Oh! come—get up—lift up thine eyes! But where?
Yet, all around, the vernal Earth is fair,
Veiling a lovely promise, all her own!
Why have not all the joys of Earth ingrown
Even to my Soul, and filled it with an air
Stirring with scents, bird-songs, and all that's there,
Hid in the leaf, bark, flower, even stone?

I will be happy, as the Earth around me!
What's to prevent—have I a heart to mend?
I cannot mend it until Joy has found me!
And shall not all hearts die, to be reborn—
Yes! break in dust, like flower-seeds? Come, Friend—
When all the stars grow faint, look for the Morn!

THE HOLY LIGHT OF SORROW

"THE LIGHT IN EVERY TEAR!"

THE day, that comes from Heaven,
Is kept but in a tear—
It is the fire Promethean,
For which He suffered here—

The light, that burneth not,
But maketh all things clear—
As rain, that spurneth not
The dust, but dieth here!

Did pauper Earth not borrow,
Darkling, the dews of Sorrow—
Where were those little lamps,
Lighted from Heaven's camps!

The light of day is meet
And maketh all things sweet—
But that of tears not least,
O kindly dews, O Priest!

FLING WIDE THE WINDOWS

Fling wide the windows of the wasting Soul—
And let nor rust, nor vine the shutters chain—
Lest thou canst never open them again
And darkling sit and sip thy scanty bowl!
Too much of candle-light has been thy dole—
For want of sun and air thy roses wane—
They shall but bloom the better for the rain;
Beware lest night leave not thine eyesight whole!

Fling wide the windows—thou shalt hear afar
The song, that birds have never sung before,
And hear the Weaver humming at his loom;
For thee, on yonder thorn, a rose shall bloom—
For thee is dying into day a star—
Fling wide the windows, for the night is o'er!

JOY FROM SORROW, II

I BORROW joy from sorrow,
A rainbow from the rain—
If life were not in shadow,
My star would shine in vain!

And so, for many darkling woes,
I may not wisely mourn—
For well I know, the sweetest rose
Must blossom from a thorn!

GOOD: THE EPILOGUE

WHAT is Good—if I may ask?
"He cometh in disguises—
Comic, or tragic mask;
Doffed, with the old surprises!"

What is Good—if I may ask,
I would wish to know him?
"Marry! He'll unmask,
But when good you show him!"

Beauty

I. Emotion

THE GENIUS

Along the mountain ledge I tread,
  Alone in joy and woe—
I brush the heaven with my head,
  And I have looked below:

I do not meet with anyone—
  No sound is in the air—
Within an arm's reach of the sun,
  But one step to despair!

HYMN TO THE NORTH STAR

Star of the North! O Star, most high,
  In silent splendor on thy throne—
Ruler of earth and sea and sky,
  Pilot of all ships, dark, alone—
Around thee move, as in a dream,
  The choiring golden court above—
Star of the North! O Star, supreme,
  Thy name—thy name is Love!

Star of the North! Lone Star of Love,
  Enthroned upon the soul of time—
Into our darkness, from above,
  Oh! rain thine influence sublime—
Thou steadfast Heart of flaming gold,
  In whose command the suns have trod—
Swing us to thee, Lodestar of old,
  Star of our Love—our God!

TEARS

Tears of failure—
Tears of want—
Tears, for what in
Me is scant—

Like a flower,
Dews on fire
Lift me higher,
Lift me higher!

MUSIC IN THE MINSTER

As, in the awful loneliness and peace
Of sleeping mountains, the winds' cavalry
Down the ravine come sweeping to the sea,
Hurling their glorious anthem of release
Up at the skies, until the sounds increase
Out of the caves, like serfs, arising free
With shouts, to follow as the infantry,
Off to the ocean—where their sound shall cease—

Oh! so the mighty organ's voices pour
A whirlwind of rich music down the nave,
Rousing the echoes from each eery cave
Above the low stones of the stream-worn floor—
And far across the olden legions wave,
Stilled at the sight, that breaks upon the door!

THE MIDNIGHT BELL

DUET

"Tone!" The tower bell is tolling—
"Zone!" The moon is over rolling—
"Moan!" A distant sentry keepeth
"Lone!" watch, while the city sleepeth;

"Gone!" I see my life behind me,
"Done!" I never can unbind me—
"On!" One moment more forever
"Gone!" I can restore it never;

"On!" And still the world goes slowly
"On!" And still it leaves life lowly
"Gone!" Hold! doom not yet the centuries—
"Done!" .....

FAITH

Thank God! I cannot see
What will come to me—
Should it failure be,
I would die!

Thank God! I have to trust,
I will not be dust—
If my Spirit must,
Let me die!

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A LITTLE RHAPSODY

I WILL sing a little song unto my Love,
For my mouth is sweet with her name —
A little song of fields, and birds and brooks,
Busy in hurrying around their flower Loves,
Busy in dressing them with a thousand affections!

For I, too, am of Heaven —
And my thoughts are the music of the mind,
Sending mad thrills to my temples
And running, like a sweet hand, down to my feet!

O beautiful meadows and stately grasses around me —
Why are you waving, nodding and whispering so?
Surely, you are chatting over this enchanting scandal —
Surely, you have stolen some honey out of my heart —
Surely, it is you, not I, that are having your Sweethearts beside you!

But see! every flower is delighted —
Oh! how they smile!
Even the mighty Heavens are beaming upon us —
For all things love true Lovers!

Hey! little wild rose—
Do not smile at me so saucily!
Did I not catch a bee, kissing you yesterday?
Nay! do not hang your head—" 'Twas all his fault!" I suppose?

Oh! I shall never get tired of these fields of Love—
Never get tired of lying among the clovers—
Never get tired of singing beautiful things—
For every blade, that's here, was made for Love,
And this morning, at least, I am Love himself!

TRUE TO THE KINDRED POINTS OF HEAVEN AND HOME

Beauty! if thou would'st have me such
As I would fain have thee—
Let me not love thee, Love, too much,
Nor thou too much love me;

But love thou me as I love thee,
Both neither more nor less—
Lest what may seem a joy to me
Prove thine unhappiness:

My Love! though I would die in flight,
To reach thy flaming star—
Whether for lack or too much light,
I cannot fly so far!

A SONG IN THE MOUNTAINS

We sang on the lakes in the mountains—
  But, as soon as our song was dead,
From a thousand, rainbowed fountains
  The echoes sprang o'erhead;

And the whole dome rang like a bluebell—
  Holy and clear and mellow—
As lone as the tone of the moon-shell,
  But ripe as a violoncello!

Then held in a glorious wonder
  And swelled with the sounds sublime—
We beheld the Heavens asunder
  And thrilled with the Angels' chime;

As the sun sank down, in his glory,
  Like a hero, dying, but proud—
While the hills, that knew his story,
  In solemn procession bowed!

O ye glorious mountain echoes!
  Shall a single human voice
Have the power, to free your shadows
  And awake your souls to rejoice?

O ye, that sleep in the mountains,
In the dim and lonely caves—
How long have been sealed your fountains,
How long to the silence slaves?

Awake! thou Rainbowed River,
Thou hymn of a thousand parts—
I call with the call of the Lover,
That sings in the Nations' hearts!

A WILD ROSE

A ROSE, unravished by the throng,
In wildness blooms—
Where wind and wavelet sigh a song
Of its perfumes:

That rose, my secret love for thee,
In vain entreats,
At thy fair feet, each passing bee
To lay its sweets!

Beside the rose, Hope's violet
Once smiled unknown:
Now pressed, Hope crumbles to Regret—
Love droops alone!

No more on Hope thy Spirit's dew
In twilight falls—
Burning to dust for thirst of you,
Unheard it calls!

And to the dell, where Love doth blow,
I sometimes stray;
Alas! that even I should know
It blooms to-day!

THE MEADOW-LARK

Out and away, Love, o'er meadows of hay, Love,
Glittering meadows as wide as the seas;
Racing and chasing with laughter and play, Love—
Fluttering pennants, that fly in the breeze!
Fresh is the scent of the blossoming meadows,
Plaintive and sweet is the lover lark's sigh—
Hark! he is calling now, "Sweets aye! Steal away!"
Over the meadows of billowy rye!

Hark! for my Heart is a meadow-lark calling,
Calling to thee, Dear!—Nobody hears!
Lightly his silvery bubbles are falling,
Falling to earth, and bursting to tears!
Slowly the darkness is gathering round him,
Singing away on the old fence still;
Darker to dark—ah! the hawk has found him!
Silence rains, and the whip-poor-will!

MAN IS UNDER NATURE'S BAN

THE fairy bird peered at the blue,
To fling a paean fairly;
But when the wind said, "Hush!"—he flew
And left me hiding sparely!

I knew not, as we fled apart,
What woes the wind began O—
But wept, a little, in my heart,
That I was under ban O!

HYMN TO THE RISING SUN

GIVER of life, O sun among the stars,
Rise from the shades and shine upon the earth—
Yon clusters of the Dead no darkness mars,
But earth is deaf and blind before her birth;
Her birth into thy world of blushing light,
Where sleeping buds their dewy lips unclose—
For where were they, so near us in the night,
But for the light of thy returning rose!
Break on us! sun of Love; within us lie,
As in the myriad daisies, ere the day,
The golden hearts of mysteries most high,
Images of thyself, that hide away—
Till lorn for thee, our daisy eyelids drawn,
Earth opes a thousand morning-stars to dawn!

SATYR SONG

A Satyr, I bore no soul,
Till Love came about the bend—
  For Love's the beginning of all
  And Love is the end!

So I would that I had no soul,
With nought to mend—
  For Love's the beginning of all
  And Love is the end!

A SONG OF SLEEP

At night, my Spirit creeps
  Out of its house of clay,
And over the starry deeps
  Soars far away:

But, ere the robin's ode,
  My Spirit creeps once more
Into its dark abode
  By a hidden door!

So all that my Soul retains
  Of its dreamland, star a-bloom,
Are a few phantasmal strains
  And a faint perfume:

Stirring with them, all day
  It brightens my home with song,
Dreaming how far away
  It will be, ere long!

Some night, my Soul shall soar
  With the singing comets, lost—
To return oh! nevermore
  To its house of dust:

And none shall ever know
  Of my house, my old repose—
Unless above it blow
  Some Lover's rose!

A SONG OF MELANCHOLY

My heart is like a broken bell,
  Sunk in a dismal sea;
It hath a doleful tale to tell,
  It cannot tell to thee:
Only an echo in its shell
  Sighs for the distant shore;
Swung by the wind and every swell—
  "Never, never more!"

SAFE AND SURE

Out of the depths, I raise
A hymn to God!
Breathing my last, I praise
His outstretched rod!
One and alone, I live
Unto the last—
Knowing what God will give,
When it is past!

Sing! on the sinking ship—
What do I care
Though all its planks may slip
Into despair—
What is the sea to me?
Swinging, each portal
Leads to the Life, that's free—
I am immortal!

THE CURSE OF CAIN

Why does the bird fly away, mother—
Have I not been good to-day?
I have brought some crumbs for my little brother!
Is he afraid to stay?

'Tis the curse of Cain, of thy father's father,
And a Child must suffer, too, Dear—
'Tis because, poor Love, we live on each other,
And the curse of the World is fear!

JUST ONCE

THE butterfly is floating
O'er meadows, sweet with hay—
The wren is madly singing,
Bathed in the flood of day—
Oh! wilt thou come away, to play,
And trust the road to chance?
Life's noon is on the wing! they say—
So come away—just once!

Oh! wilt thou with me wander
Through daisies, o'er the lea?
There's not a one, to hinder—
So come along with me!
How through the clover twines the bee,
And how he kisses in the dance!
The moon is shadowed soon! May we
Not be as he? Just once!

LOVE AND DEATH

LOVE is God, and Love is human—
Love! and thou shalt be a God;
But, ere thou can'st be in Heaven,
Be as little flowers even—
And a flower. sweet as woman,
Lifts her face, to be downtrod!

A SCOTCH SONG

I KNOW Somebody O,
I lo'e Somebody O!
  I maun see her, doun the dale,
  Climbin' wi' her milkin' pail—
  Och! my heart, an' maun ye quail,
Will ye no be slow?

No' she nestles to her co',
Croonin' what I can but lo'e—
  Och! her luvely body O
  Melts my min' awa'—
  Sure! I canna wark at a',
Sae near my Dearie O!

Haud! my heart, an' l'ee her gae!
Bide a wee—it maun be sae!
  (Lost an' lane, when she is gane,
    Saft maun be your sprinklin'!)
  Haud, until her window pane
    Is a-twinklin'!

SPRING

SAFE in the orchard, in their snowy cot,
Darby and Joan cling to their happy lot—
Spring is about them, and the trees are white,
White as the curls, the cottage hides to-night!

TO ONE

How beautiful thy soul, to love me so!
What beauty lies in me, I may not know—
Save when I am a glass to thy fair face,
Who fancies, here, to see another's grace!

How dark the mirror of my soul would be,
Were it not lighted by thy love for me—
An icy moon, hid from his sun, I too
Would mourn my buried world with tears of dew!

As when the altar's taper leans to light
Some candle, kissing in the church of night—
So, while thy flaming soul stoops over mine,
My soul takes fire at the touch of thine!

Ah! once, how little did I care to know,
The star could love the lowly flower so—
But now, without thee in the lonely gloom,
I fear, that I would lose my Spirit's bloom!

Love is the light of Life—far better dead
Is he, from whom the light divine hath fled;
Love is the life of Life, his heat and motion,
And life is tempered to the heart's devotion!

THE WINTER OF THE SOUL

Summer, and yet, the old man, he doth congeal—
He feels the winter, that Youth cannot feel!

LOVE AND AGE

Fear not, my Love, that I shall love thee less,
When faded is thy maiden loveliness—
Opens that daisy, in my dawning eyes,
As when she rose, at first, to our sunrise!

When prisoners in the snow of yesterdays,
We warm our hands, before the gathered blaze—
How we shall con those petals, O my rose,
That in the pages of my life repose!

Ah! thou shalt grow, as yon departing sun,
More dawn-like, as thy summer day is done—
No evening cloud shall hide thy rosy ray,
I, like the wind, will blow them all away!

When melodies are silent, friends are fled,
When all the sweetness of the day is dead—
When withered are thy beauties, gone before,
For every one, I shall but love thee more!

THE CALL IN THE HEART

"Thee! Thee! Thee—
Whoever, wherever Thou art!"
Is the call in my hollow heart,
As the moan in the shell for the sea:

Oh! the ceaseless monotone
That moans, as the days depart,
"My Own! My Own! My Own—
Whoever, wherever Thou art!"

Come! Love! come out of the sea
To the shell on the lonely shore—
Come! Love, oh! come and be
In my heart forevermore!

HEREDITY

A LITTLE of the everlasting dust,
Whereof the fleeting butterfly was moulden,
Clings to its wings—as unto moments must
The immemorial dust of ages golden!

TO THE SPHINX

DUST unto dust? But star-dust all the while!
Cup upon cup? But higher what is full!
Is it not well, contented Sphinx? Then smile—
He, too, hath smiled, who thought thee beautiful!

A MADRIGAL

I WISH thee many woes, my Love,
I wish thee many woes—
How sweet to crush the cruel thorns
Around my blushing rose!
I wish thee tattered weeds, my Sweet—
A barefoot maid, to glean—
I'd heap thine arms with golden wheat,
Bind sandals to thy rosy feet,
And robe thee as a queen, my Sweet,
And robe thee as a queen!
Wert thou, Dear, but a daisy,
No sweeter than the rest—
Among them all I'd raise thee,
And pin thee to my breast:
But withered in the sunshine,
Or by a heel low lain—
My tears should turn thy sunny wine,
The golden dew, that made thee shine,
That made thee shine again!

POVERTY

EVEN as these poor men, I see,
In thy house, Lord, so let me be—
Nay! of them all let me be low'st,
That I may feel thy greatness most!

THE HIDDEN LIFE

I LIVE a thousand lives—
  My life, thy life—
And, when my sorrow thrives,
  I live the most:
So, on an ocean's woe,
  High am I tost;
I live a thousand lives—
  What happy strife!

MAN AND BEAUTY

AH, BEAUTY! that thy lips should leave a throe!
My body strives to thee—again! again—
My soul, thrown down at last, cries "Take her then,
And learn the wage of joy is equal woe!"
Ah, God! that joy, the sweetest that I know,
That joy of wedding souls should be a sin—
That Beauty, like a siren star, should win
Me to the mountaintop—to fall below!

Stop, cloud! stop wind! Speak! speak—oh! tell me why
These things are so—I feel that I am wrong—
Will no voice hush the sobbing of my song?
Will no voice from the gentle, pitying sky
Comfort the child with some old lullaby?
Then I—"Be strong!" . . . The Heaven—
  "Be strong! be strong!"

A LOVE SONG

Up wind! go wind,
Fly sad and joyous wind—
Tell her, I love but her,
Queen of all, I find—
Up wind! go wind,
Fly sad and joyous wind—
A thousand flowers nod their heads—
Go wind, go wind!

Up wind! go wind,
From the mountain tops oh! bring it—
From the seas, from the leas,
With the waves and rivers sing it!
Fly wind! and say,
With sweet music in her ear—
The very stars sing in their course,
"I love thee, Dear!"

Haste wind, haste wind!
Say unto her, my Love,
The Heavens are her, the sun, the air—
Hold! that is not enough;
Go wind! and sing,
I come, like snow on fire,
A god, with sunbeams on his head,
To storm his heart's desire!

THE LIGHT

Where are the flowers of earth,
When the sun is fled—
What is the world worth,
When Love is dead:

An ember, she must repose
In the urn of night—
Till thorns of a crowning rose
Let in the light!

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE ROSE

Of all the happy flowers, that flare
  Out on the sunny lea,
There's none so fair, it can compare
  With what thou art to me:
Thou art the sum of every one—
  A flower is to thee
Only a star, where many are
  And only birds can be!

When like a butterfly, that sips
  The nectar from a rose,
Lightly, upon thy dewy lips,
  I still as death repose—
How cold to feel a wind may steal
  Over the summer hay
And wither oh! my flower, my flower,
  And blow me far away!

TO A SUNSET

Thou full-blown promise of a Dawn to be!
Thou starry wake of crowded, golden Day,
Her crimson Hour-sails full-set, oh! stay,
Or bear thy Lover, too, abroad with thee!
How breathless, now, but mournful, stands each tree—
Like those, who saw Columbus sail away—
Even the drawn-up mountains seem to pray,
With brows a-glow, for all thy destiny!

So sunk the Soul of Christ! as hill and vale,
Chilled by the parting, trembled—and the dews
Fell fast as tears from Heaven's closing eyes!
A little while, and all his light we lose—
A little while, and from the night we rise—
Then! to the Country of the Dawn, O hail!

LOVE'S REPENTANCE

Ah, Love! could you but see my Soul,
The godlike image of me,
And all the glory of my role—
Then! Love—then you would love me!

But could you see my Spirit's ill,
The dust upon the flake—
And tell me, that you loved me still—
No, no!—my heart would break!

MY MOTHER'S MUSIC

As FROM the dark, primeval rock
With but a fragrant rod,
Moses struck forth a spring, that broke
Into the light of God—

So thou, my Mother, with thy finger
Struck, from the night sublime,
The melody, that loves to linger,
Starring the heart of Time!

THE MASTER-SINGER

THEIR sweetest songs the Poets brought—
Songs of renown,
Songs of the Heart and Soul—and thought
To win the crown;
Then someone sang—'twas known by heart
In many lands,
And well-nigh worn and torn apart
By many hands—
A song, which made all others fall!
Its name was gone—
The oldest, sweetest song of all
Was signed "Anon"!

A VACANT HOUSE

A VACANT house! How gray its face has grown—
I never thought a thing could be so bare—
Forsaken by the birds, and even care,
It sleeps, as still and silent as a stone:
High weeds are where the brown-eyed sunflowers shone—
And oh! 'tis dark and chilly as a lair!
No more does anyone, not even the air,
Sing the old songs—it dreams, but dreams alone!

Then oh! how like that empty home, the heart
From which—how long ago—Love did depart,
As if it dwelt within the waste forever;
For, like that little homestead, warp it must,
Mouldering, overgrown with moss, to dust—
For Life can live without Love's household never!

VETERANS

As I pass the strangers' faces
In the street—
Shocked by those unmeant grimaces,
That I meet—
Then I see the shapes of fear,
In the world, that would appear,
Could the face be lifted clear,
Like a sheet!

But the Singer in me says
  That they are,
Not the track of Wickedness,
  But the scar—
Then with beating heart to scan,
For, by God, there's not a Man
Who is not a Veteran
  In Life's war!

TO EMOTION: EPILOGUE

Dayspring! From which have come
All shades, that over the hilltops roam—
Dayspring! In which we see
The forms of all set free;

I say Fare-well to Thee,
Knowing that Thou wilt be
In my heart, my heart forever,
And woken at my will;

For the music of Emotion
Is no self-centred ocean—
But moveth one to another,
Although one's star be still!

Beauty

II. Fancy

TO A BUTTERFLY

Little barque with gaudy sails,
  Hustled by the summer breeze
Over hills and over dales,
  Like a chip upon the seas—
Hoy! thou little boatman merry,
I will pay thee thrice thy ferry!

Take me to the distant hills—
  We can hail our neighbors nested,
Stop to drink the daffodils,
  Off again, ere we are rested—
Shouting to each busy fellow,
Birds and bees—oh, hello! hello!

Hi! look out! A rout of squalls,
  Children, make a mimic sally,
Hustling thee, with hunting calls,
  Way out in a wild, new valley—
Now they scamper off, to scare
Thee becalmed, thou know'st not where!

Hey! my cruiser, butterfly,
  Hast no hand upon thy helmie?
Reckless little pilot! Why
  Does not some breeze overwhelm thee—
But, with neatly nodding prow,
Beating skyward—tell me how?

Tell me, boatman—thou, who art
  Like my Soul upon the sea,
In its beating, bounding heart—
  Is no Spirit guiding thee?
Yes! But, when the barque goes down,
Dost thou, little Soul, not drown?

Art thou not afraid to die,
  Fairy derelict? How brave,
Oh! how careless thou canst be,
  Floating over grave on grave—
Hush!—When little boats capsize,
Up the fairy boatman flies!

So! thou wilt not heed me now,
  Shoaled upon that foamy flower!
What if, lassoing thy prow
  With a spider's coil of silver,
I should play at pirates bold,
Plundering thy fairy gold?

Tell me—where did'st win that honey?
  Gallant pirate, tell me true!
But, no doubt, thou spend'st that money
  At each tavern, thou com'st to—
Pardon! 'twas but banter! Pray,
Thy sweet anchor do not weigh!

Well I never! thou art nary
  Boat and boatman, as I guessed—
But a fallen Rainbow-fairy,
  With a tiny, sable vest,
And a face, my fairy girl,
Chisled like a tiny pearl!

Angel from the holy wood,
  Stained as with the flowers' dust—
Taking sunshine at the flood,
  Sharing clovers' honeycrust—
Dream, that squanders noontide hours
Kissing honeyed lips of flowers—

Art thou really risen from
  Tombs in lonely forest places,
Risen from a cold corpse, come
  Here to run in sparkling races
Over fields, where heavenly fires
Burn upon the flowers' spires?

Tell me! full-blown, risen gem,
  Inlaid—has the Winged Boy
Tossed thee from his diadem,
  Letting loose a winged Joy?
Little loafer! Fancy spun
Thee of sunbeams—just for fun!

Once a fairy loved a flower;
'Twas a delicate sweet-pea,
Silken wing'd, but with no power
To elope with him, so he
Freed her with a kiss and sigh,
Just to be his—butterfly!

See her dancing dazzlingly
To the king, her splendid sun—
Sweetheart of the busy bee,
Wiling him from work begun!—
Sweetest lives are fleet, 'tis said—
Hanging by a golden thread!

Farewell! then, sweet butterfly,
Farewell, little wanton maid,
Idle, thoughtless, soon to die—
Unsuspecting, unafraid—
Like a first love, all too sweet,
Thou art flown—no more we meet!

A MERMAID'S SONG

Where the seaweeds, lithe as willows,
Sway, within the arms of billows,
Languid, sleepy, satiate
With the senses' sublimate—
There is such a music strange
That, in circling, change to change,
It shall seem, enchanting you,
Ever old and ever new!

MEMORY

As, THROUGH the sunset air,
The land below is fair—
The vale, that brought me breath,
Is beautiful from Death:

'Tis marvellous to see
Nothing but Memory—
To lie, where no to-morrow
Can bring me sorrow!

HEART OF EARTH

NATURE is ever young and beautiful—
Whether she don the Winter's pure disguise,
Chanting through woods her patient litanies
And sounding on the organ, sweet and dull—
Or whether, in the Spring's mysterious lull,
She pose, in melting marriage draperies,
Praying to thee, with still, bewildering eyes,
Silent and swift, as yonder white sea-gull;

But it is when the Summer comes, she slips
All her Bride robes, and shows herself to Heaven,
Bathing in billowy skies, the seas of gold:
Oh! happy is the poet, to whom 'tis given,
In dim green dells, to touch her wilding lips
And wake the sleeping Beauty, as of old!

TO A MOMENT

Moment flitting by,
Like a butterfly,
Beautiful as Joy —
  Let thy wing
Only leave some dust
On the lips it kissed,
So that flowers must
  From them spring!

Moment flitting by—
What a joy, when I
Spell the tapestry
  Of thy pinions:
How I try to spin
Webs to catch thee in,
So that I can pin
  Thee for minions!

Then! thou canst not die,
Moment-butterfly,
But art such a joy
  Freely given,
That, when evermore
Spirits o'er thee pore,
They, instead, must soar
  Out to Heaven!

LOVE AND SPRING

WHERE is my Love, to-day, to-day,
When violets by the brook
Are holding a musicale of May
In a melancholy nook—
When the humblebee his worship hies
Now there, now here, now there,
While, busy with birds and butterflies,
The flowers are holding a Fair!

The flowers are holding a Fair to-day,
A Fair to-day, a Fair to-day—
But what is the good, when She's away
Every field is bare!

I looked o'er the lea, but its whole book
Only told of the way she took—
Then all through the leaves and into the air
And under that little flower there,
For I was in despair!

Hi! saucy bird, in the clouds above,
Seest thou not my Love?
Then why dost thou sing so tauntingly—
(He would not sing, if he could not see—
Ha! he is blind to me!)

Give over, Spring! Thy dancers jeer—
What is the use of all this cheer,
If not surrounding her—
How could I spy the Spring,
Or hear this singing Ring,
Were not my May Queen here!

SECRETS BY THE WAY

Listen! my sister, my sweet little rose—
Thou wilt befriend me, I know!
Songs have I sung to thee, every wind knows—
See, every leaf nods so!

When thy sun said Good-bye,
But left thy cheek no dew—
Ere thou couldst droop and die,
Somebody still was true—
Somebody heartened thee with his tear-rushes,
Breathed on thy lips and brought back all thy blushes!
Come—wilt thou nod, fair rose?

Listen! my sister, my rose—
When my love wanders this way—

She, too, is wont to confide in thee, flower,
Trading in secrets—I've seen you together—
Every rose will, they say!
When my Love wanders this way—

Tell her the secret of
Thy bud and bloom is Love—
Nor is a rose thy face
But in thy sun's embrace—
Whisper no bud would sleep
Out in the clover,
But with a star to keep
Stern watch above her;

Tell her, thou rosy nun,
I'd be her star and sun—
I'd be her star and her sun!

Wilt thou do this?
What bliss!

Listen! my sweet little rose—
Only one more secret—one!
Say to my Love, say—
(She's tripping o'er hay this way!)

Can a flower stem the wind
Shielded by no mossy boulder,
Nor with tender roots entwined
Round a stone-heart, stronger, older?

Every flower hath a bee,
Every bee a flower—
May she marry, marry me,
And this very hour;
There will come a time, when we
Have not any power—
Every flower hath a bee,
Every bee a flower!

ON THE WAY

In spring—
What rapture
Nature may capture
Some dusky hour
Conceiving that flower!
  Where is that patient control,
  With which Nature has spun from her Soul
  A flower—so little, yet whole?

Think of the joy,
The fun—
When Nature felt that her toy
Was done!
  Look at the robe, she wears
  This summer,
  To celebrate her flower—
  Covering all her cares
  With virgin power
  From the New-comer!

How many, many sons and daughters—
Such as that leaf and flower—
Nature has borne!
Think of her woes—as deep, but wide as the waters:
Think of her joys — the little gems of a shower!
Hast thou the power?
What wonder, if she be worn—
What wonder a mother is worn, in the fall,
Seeing her children all
So ruddy and blustery—
Feeling old Winter's pall
Draw over her, dusty;
Think of her olden joys and sorrows—
But, then, her to-morrows!

Now she is fair as a ghost—
Sunny, yet wintry—
Rest is upon her breast—
How she smiles, blest!
Must we forever be mourning?
Look! Without warning,
Says each, snowy lid—
I am not dead,
Instead
Spring is within me!

HEART'S SEASONS

THE seasons of my heart
  Are swift to come and go—
No sooner violets start,
  Than falls the silent snow!

But never dreams the rose,
  That, whereso'er she moves,
The court of Summer goes
  And all the land is Love's?

Oh! who will come, to glean
  The leaves, along her way—
That greeted her, so green,
  And blushed, and turned to gray?

A BIRD SONG TO THE SPRING

O SWEETHEART
  Spring,
Thou dost impart
  Blossoms to everything—
But most unto my heart!

  And sing
    To Thee,
With sweetest art,
  Larks on the wing—
    Oh! see,
The highest is my heart!

CHILD TALK

What strange tongues have we at birth!
What on earth say we of earth?
Old lands, lowlands—what's he say,
Babbling in this wild, new way?

EVE

God thought—Man knoweth not enough, to cleave
With wisdom to his natural family;
He readeth not my brook, my stone, my tree,
Nor why my Heavens laugh, nor oceans grieve:
I will—of foam and flower and sunbeam—weave
A perfect thing, through which his Soul may see
The beauty of all Nature, so that he
Shall love his kin!—And so God fashioned Eve!

O perfect Eve! For Thee, I love all things—
Choir of all, in that sole voice that brings
The life of Silences into my heart:
In Thee are Heaven's joys and ocean's woes;
O Love, how from thy lips I learnt at start
All the immortal passion of the rose!

A JOY

Atalanta ran swifter than Man,
Because she was a joy;
Had her Lover's heart but let her start,
What use the Blindfold Boy!

I never caught a happy thought,
Because I let her by—
Though, but to live with one, I'd give
The Apple-of-mine-eye!

THE BIRDS

Birds do not die—I never saw one dead,
Except that had been killed through carelessness!
Care? Ah! what care have they, save but to bless
Their little ones, or man, or trees instead!
To live and die, as if the world were bed—
A place to float in, dream, or play, or kiss—
And rise each dawn, as from the Rose of Bliss,
Out in a world, where wing and wing may wed—

Ah! this is happiness—never to take a fly
In the to-morrow, but to fling it off;
As if to bathe to-day were not enough!
Oh, never! never to feel Death creeping nigh—
Never to feel his claws, until we die,
And, then, turn out to be . . . a ball of fluff!

MY HOUSEHOLD

WHENCE, sweet Joy—now whither Sorrow,
Come to-day and gone to-morrow:
Whence, brave Sorrow—whither Joy—
Is it blind-man's buff, Winged Boy?

Joy creeps in, while Sorrow counteth—
Joy is caught, and Sorrow free!
Small a body's peace amounteth—
Children, what a pair you be!

A DEWDROP

I WOULD our Souls could melt in one,
One flaming drop of dew—
As two snowflakes, warmed by the sun,
Love would melt me in you!

What though His Tear should melt and rise,
It would be free, not void—
Oh! though each morn we sought the skies,
We should not be destroyed!

Oh! say not that this may not be—
We both know well enough,
That on this sod our love is God
And, after that, is Love!

THE SOUL ON BEAUTY

As THE lips of Beauty give no repose,
The Soul has the same, sweet power
As the moth, that kisses the red, red rose,
Then flies to another flower!

MEMORY

MEMORY mine, Old Friend, forever near me—
Freer to chide, but ever wont to bless—
Yet, when I will, a true advisor—yes!
So true a friend, that falser friends may fear thee!
How long have been thy least attempts to cheer me—
We two, that tented in the wilderness—
What stories can'st thou tell, in my distress,
Endearing present hours, as they endear thee!

Memory! should we part, I should go mad—
Even should something wound thee, when the sad
Hours arrive, and thou would'st fail to come:
We fell together, when the Angels fell—
And shall we part, now we are marching home?
Ah, no! God lets us, two, take Heaven, or Hell!

BALLAD OF THE ROSE AND THE BEE

She was a gay, wild rose—
Never been kissed!
He was a jolly bee;
Many a sweetheart he;
Kissed any flower, he chose;
Many, I wist!
"Troubadour bee," said she,
"Sweetly you sing!
Whither so swiftly away?
Stay for an hour, a day!"—
"Ever! I vow," said he,
"Never to wing!"

Time, with the wings of light,
Soaring flew o'er;
And, ere the rivulet froze,
Withered the beautiful rose
From a sunset to a night,
Lovely no more!

"Where is thy honey now?"
Grumbleth the bee—
"Why should I stay with thee, pray?
I must be flying away!"
Faithless, forgetting his vow,
Leaves her to die!

Yellow the leaves, her pillows—
Snowy her sheets!
Honey, nor hive hath the bee—
Beggared and outcast is he—
None, but the weeping willow's
Pity he meets!

"MY LASSIE HA'E A CANNIE ART"

My lassie ha'e a cannie art—
Now dinna ye gang try it!
She's gi'en a kiss an' ta'en a heart—
Deil kens wha' she does wi' it!

I aft ha'e pried her bonnie mou',
To draw my heart awa' then—
But Deil tak' me, I'm that fou',
I let it slip, an' a' then!

I aft ha'e laced her little waist,
To buy her heart wi' blisses—
But Deil tak' her, she's that chaste,
She only keeps the kisses!

LOVE IN DEATH

Do Death not part, or quench these Lovers?
Ye stars! what makes your eyes so bright—
Has Death but hid these daily Rovers,
To double Love's delight?

LIFE AGAIN

Love is life to me, its joy
Makes of me a boy —
Chasing Pleasure, blind to pain —
Hey! the world goes round again!

If the starry Heaven covers
All the ancient lovers —
Made, by Love, as young and fair—
Hey! the dizzy round up there!

A DREAM

Ah! Love, to thine arms I creep,
As a child doth creep to sleep:
Sweet! thy bosom where I swoon,
Is a flower-bed of June:
Floating, oh! so dreamily,
Lone, as on a sunset sea!

A MOTH

She fluttered to the Mount of Love,
A Moth, who loved the flying —
A Moth, as downy as a dove,
That never 'hinks of dying:

But there a Falcon, bold and bad,
Who fed on fearless things,
Destroyed her soul — alas! she had
No eyes upon her wings!

CLEARING

AN ETCHING

The storm is like a pearl,
  That, loosened from the lea,
Maketh a water-whirl
  Of Mermen, such as we:
The storm is like a pearl —
But, now, the Sunshine-girl,
  Shy as Pandora pale,
  Opens the shelly vale!

Now, in the purest light
  And etched upon the skies,
Its barns divinely bright,
  The checkered valley lies;
While, in its night made clear,
As far as it seems near,
  Straddling a cloud jet-black,
  A Rainbow, borne aback!

HER COMPASS

Love's ruby compass is my heart —
  Come, peep! and Thou shalt see
Cupid, therein, hath pinned his dart,
  That cannot resting be,
  Until it turneth unto Thee —
For ever, Love, Thou art
  The only Lodestar unto me
And of all Heaven the start!

LOVE'S ABLUTION

My little Snowflake, had'st thou dipped
In Youth's vermillion wine—
The rosy stains, thy Spirit sipped,
Would only make it shine!

What! nay?—Then thou would'st lose each one,
In this thy Lover's light—
As apple blossoms in the sun
Are washed from red to white!

FANCY: EPILOGUE

Fare-thee-well, my Fancy—
If thou must be going—
Tell me where to find thee,
Just by Nature's showing;

Break a branch, in passing
Through my wood, so dim—
Leave a kiss, by glassing,
In the brooklet slim;

Down the dale, I know well,
Up the hill, thou fliest—
Leave a sign, my gospel,
Ere thou seeming diest;

Fare-thee-well, my Fancy,
  Keep thee well-in-truth;
But recall, Miss Nancy,
  Thou hast all my youth!

Beauty

III. fantasy

THE WHITE MOUNTAIN

Far in the polar regions, where the dawn
Divides the years in darkness and in light,
Stands the White Mountain, in a robe so bright
His splendor is too fair to look upon:
In perfect peace, unfound by any one—
Mortality hath not so rare a might
As breathe such icy air, that breath would
blight—
He stands to all eternity alone!

What monumental silence—not a sound,
Save when in striking stars his head is crowned,
Catching the icy fires of true tints!
With instant freezing tears and frosted breath
Dared Love, alone, to kiss his brow, till hints
Of moving snowdrifts woke the face of Death!

THE INDIAN HELEN

Indian Summer, autumn serene—
Yet, in her war-paint, like a queen
Stands the rose-red Wood, chalked gold and
green,
With the dew-beads round her dangling!

Over the hills, where all hunts cease,
Wreathing clouds from his Pipe of Peace,
The Sea-Spirit squats, and dreams his Niece
Will set all the Red Leaves wrangling!

THE TREE OF LIFE

I. AT SUNSET

The woven branches of the Tree of Night—
Whose phantom bole grows black, athwart green glare
Curdling to purple, climbing Heaven's stair—
Embower the vale with star-buds, golden bright!
Full-blown one falls, a ruby rose of light,
Whose clouds of crimson petals prank the Air,
Swooning in scented arms of Sleep, the Fair,
As wan and laggard Hours of Day take flight!

Airily float the falling shadow-leaves
From Night's Tree, at red autumn-time of Day,
As fitful purples a dim dream inlay—
And, as the sunset withers to pearl sheaves,
A shower of spectral foliage hides away
Some mountain green, that Angels' tears receives!

II. AT DAWN

The dome, that Tree of Life, that darkling Tree—
Where pends green Apple-earth, cool burnished of
Sweet winds orchestral, down God's orchard grove—
Dapples the pearl stream of Eternity!
At blow of dawn, when nothing white is free
And shadow-leaves are Apple-earth's alcove,

The morning-star, upon a branch above,
Wakes the vast Hymn of the Nativity!

From silver shores the sun-flamingo springs,
Soaring slowly towards the Apple-earth;
Then, like the opal snow in sunset flight,
The Earth is stormed with blossoms of pink light,
As Heaven's Tree turns beryl blue, and flings
Her leaves, the little clouds, a-flying forth!

THREE MINIATURES

PEACOCK O' THE NIGHT

Down Heaven's steps, with tender tread
There sweeps, in stately flight,
Her Peacock—all his tail outspread—
The paradisal Night!

ELEPHANT O' THE STORM

Over the desert's drum enorme
Rolls the Elephant of the Storm—
Trumpeting, trampling through the dusk,
Tossing the moon, his orient tusk!

FAN O' THE RAINBOW

Heaven—to hide her sorrow,
When Earth had seen it—
Flashed out her fan, the rainbow,
To flirt between it!

THE SHIP OF SLUMBER

Softly over the lilac sky,
With silver Moon-sail lifted high,
Blown with winds from the Old Countree,
  The shadowy Ship of Slumber
Sails, with many a silver shoon,
Dancing the reel and rigadoon
To many a strange, phantasmal tune,
  Stirring the dim vales under!

Beware of old Slumber's pirate ship!
For out of its hold They sometimes slip,
To steal your Soul through your open lip,
  When you, like a Mermaid, slumber—
And bear it away, how far away
To a Land—I swore I would not say—
Perchance to return you, ere the day,
  If they have too great a number!

A BAT SONG

Through silent night
I steal my flight
  Under the stars with strange delight—
When owlets shout
And toads hop out,
  A spirit, blind, I flit about!
Man has his day—I have my night,
When timid things fear not his might;
I flit, when they are folded tight—
  God knows I'm right!

SPRING

A JAPANESE PHANTASY

Spring shall splinter
The Dragon, Winter,
  The steel-blue Dragon, rolled:
And the Spring shall sow
Its teeth, like snow,
  As Cadmus did of old!

Behold! far over
The fields, the clover
  Lifts through the clod each spear—
Then Spring, on his knees
Like Cadmus, sees
  Thousands of plumes appear!

MELODIES OF DEATH

I. THE ROSE

Sweet is the rose to see—
But far, too far from me!
  It may be much less red,
  When I am dead—
But it will sweeter be
  Under my head—under my head!

II. THE STAR

Sleep, little Star-love, sleep!
The lonely tears, you weep,
  Begrudge me not;
Under your dreamy head
The rose's leaves lie dead,
  Dust of my heart!

TONE PORTRAITS

I. SUNRISE

Sing! sweet bird —
Build thy faery palace, piling
Word on word—
Wake the marbly Maid of Morning,
In her eastern blue-room sleeping!
She is stirred—
Flings aside her rosy spread,
Spilling showers of dew-pearls—
Leaps, white, from the cloud, her bed—
Shakes her head,
Dashing out her golden curls!
Now she comes, amid her Flower-girls
Draped in red!
While the starry curtains down the eastern sky
Draw, to let the laughing dancers by!
Sing,
Sweet and gay—
"Day is on her way!"—
Louder, higher, sweeter shrilling aye!

II. SUNSET

Hush! sweet bird—
Thy faery serenade should fade,
Shadow-blurred,
Dream-shadowed by Twilight's brush!

Eve's abed, and with a blush,
Ne'er a word,
Drops her dewy tresses, streaming
Dark as water in the winter—
While each soft, brown eye is beaming,
As an inland sea
Full of moonlight dances gleaming!
Now she draws her rosy spread, then she
Lies a-dreaming!
While the starry curtains down the western sky
Fall, to hide her crimson canopy!
Softer, lower sound thy sleepy lay,
"Day winds far away—
Far away—
Away!"

MY GLOBE

The toy outgrows the boy—
Before I was a man,
From what was just a joy
A world of woe began:

I am thy toy, O world—
But when hast thou forgot
This boy, who could have hurled
This toy-world from his lot!

A DREAM AT SEA

I saw the starfish in the sky,
A midnight whale with moon for eye,
The Dawn's harpoon, that made him fly,
Within the dream, that drowned me!

I wondered what was in the air—
Was that a Merman over there,
Or shadow of a form more fair
Leant over, when she found me?

NOT A KISS

What though a butterfly may sip the dew
Out of a dozen, ruby cups of roses,
And any humble-bee suck honey, too,
From any little flower's jug he chooses—
What though upon the bosom of the lea,
In bridal veils, the daisies come to rest,
And many a blushing star lie laughingly
Under the sunburnt skies, in darkness pressed—
What though my wingèd Soul would sip thy Soul,
Pressing the ripe grapes of thy sunny lips,
And, starving for a crust from Love's full bowl,
I fain would fold thee, though the bowl o'ertips—
What though all Nature have Love's fullest bliss—
Craving but Thee, I am forbid that kiss!

BY THE BROOK

I LOVE thee, little streamlet,
That plays the whole day long —
I love to lie on mossy banks,
Smiling at thy sweet, girlish pranks,
Lulled by thy dreamy song:
Lulled by that old sweet song,
Those minute-bees of thine
Within my mind how swiftly store
Their flower-thought divine!

Bare to the golden sunshine,
The brook becomes a sky —
With many a faery cloud of foam
And loosened leaflet, riding home,
As it goes running by!
Now tired racing by,
Like noon, basks on its bars,
Where little water-lilies mock
The shyer golden stars!

The brook is Nature's sweetheart,
As pure as she is fair!
What laughing wavelets show her pearls,
What whirlpools, too, her sunny curls —
She is so debonair!
Her dimples dizzy Care —
And, as she trips along,
How stand the trees, to let her pass,
Enchanted by her song!

Perhaps, adown the hill-side,
The brook will coast along
Those steps, all carpeted with moss,
That numbs her fall, where skirts of floss
In misty clouds are flung!
Or, from some noisy throng,
Will wander far away,
To run out in the light again
And hide in scented hay!

Oh! how the leaves go waltzing
Adown her glassy floor—
Now sliding, hurried by the tide—
Now caught and rudely brushed aside,
To huddle close to shore!
Rejected evermore
By tides, they cannot see,
Or swept and jostled in the dance,
Some leaves must ever be.

The brook will put her shoulder,
All white with deathless youth,
To turn the mill-wheel of our Time
And make it hum the old sweet rhyme,
Grinding the corn of Ruth!
How sweet the song of truth
As chanted by the brook,
Where flowers still illuminate
Old Nature's open book!

On sandy shallows laughing,
Or spooning with the bank—
Or wreathing rocks with sprays of foam,
Or whistling through a rushes' comb,
Or sick on marshes rank,
The brook doth splash, and prank
Her bed with lilies fair,
And then, with water-cress, she weaves
Herself a lattice lair!

Oh! what a heavenly music
Is hovering in the vale!
The golden breezes softly blow
Their rustic flute of reeds, that sough
And whistle in the gale!
In that enchanted pale
Is where the birds may sing—
The brook her organ blending
With chimes the flowers ring!

While all the fields are listening
And basking in the sun,
Charmed by the music of the Spring,
They dream and smile at everything,
While Summer's quilt is spun!
And, as the brook runs on,
Sweet Spring, with magic hand,
From Winter's cornucopia shakes
Her blossoms o'er the land!

EDEN

Earth is an Apple, green and high,
With snowy poles —
Swung in the garden of the Sky,
Mid star-eyed Souls:

When the Sun consumes the earth,
Whose seed is fire,
The Moon shall know the worth
Of all desire!

THE LAND OF O!

My Soul is like a lonely home,
Forgotten long ago —
Left open to the winds, that roam
Over the polar snow —
Wide open to the winds, that come
To wander to and fro
With strange, phantasmal voices from
The utter land of O!

How still and stark and desolate
It stands across the shore,
Through silent ages to await
The heart, that comes no more;
Strange gulls go by with cries of hate,
While to the rocks' wild roar
The waves repeat, "Too soon — too late,"
Forever, as before!

TIME'S WATCH

The Sky is the watch of Time—
  Its crystal face, each day,
Is turned on the Toilers' rhyme,
  Who mark and mark it aye—
As clouding up, with every breath,
It daily grows as dim as Death:

The Sky is the watch of Time—
  Its open back, each night,
Is turned on the Dreamers' rhyme,
  Who mark no dark hand's flight—
For, when all Time is turned, 'tis given
To watch the jewelled works of Heaven!

SLEEP-WALKING

In the starlit night of earth
  Little Life, with dewlit hair,
  Hunted, wandering everywhere
From his bed of birth—
  Till his old Nurse found him there,
Dear old, dark-eyed Death:

"Back to bed, thou Child of Love—
  (He, too, walks within his sleep,
  Dreaming, blindfold, he can peep
Past the stars above)—
  Back to bed, Life, softly creep,
Dawn comes soon enough!"

CORAL ISLANDS

One by one, my dying days
Sink beneath the sea—
Till my head is islanded,
Wreathed in foam, and free—

Till, like buried coral,
I arise, but floral—
Till the winds afar
Make me like a star!

THE GODDESS OF THE DEAD

The twilit, Eastern maiden said—
"My lips are poppies, dreamful red—
Kiss me, and all the world hath fled
Away—
Kiss me, and dream that thou art dead
For aye!"

The twilit, Eastern maiden said—
"I am the Goddess of the Dead—
A man is not a Man, till wed
To Me—
O come! come kiss my poppies red,
Die on my lips, and buy instead
Eternity!"

THE SHORE

The stones, cast on this shore by many a tide,
From sundered deeps now slumber side by side;
Rolled into spheres, their grains are slowly ground
Into each other with a musical sound!

THE TUNNEL

Life is a tunnel—labyrinthine, dun;
Dark are its ends—Birth, Death—its loopholes bright;
These are the stars, through which God shoots the light,
That points and gilds the gloomy roads we run:
The low highways of Life are longer spun
Than paths, that pioneers scarce pierce aright—
Hoping to find a plain, upon the height,
Where men will not be crying for the sun:

In misty gloom the lamps of thought are hung,
Fed by immortal minds forevermore—
And still the lightnings of those truths, they swung,
Waken the ghosts among their caverns hoar;
From sunlit mountains to the sunlit shore,
Man's river trips through to its old, sweet song!

LOVE'S MUSIC

Sorrows lie from joy to joy—
  The unsounded notes
In his hands, that heavenly boy,
  Whence our music floats:
Scarcely may his fingers move,
  When the notes estrange—
Yet, a little more, and Love
  Makes a sweeter change!

THE SEA OF SLEEP

Sinking slowly, sinking slowly
  Down the dim ocean of sleep—
Mine ears grow dull, as they grow more full
  Of that circulating deep—
Softer the hush and the wash and wash
  Of waves on a vanishing shore—
Only the hum of the mumbling drum
  Of waves on a shore of yore:

Sinking slowly, sinking slowly—
  All but the eyes asleep,
Distant and dim the phantoms swim
  Through the green and glassy deep—
No pain can come to my body numb,
  Lapped in the cooling dream—
And yet, in the day, mysterious sea,
  As darkling as Death, you seem!

THE EMBER HEART AND THE HANDS OF SNOW

She holds my heart within her hands,
My heart an ember low—
Oh! come, ye winds, from distant lands—
Her hands are made of snow!

Oh! come, ye winds, come quick and blow
The heart, that hardly flashes,
So may it melt them, now—or oh!
They turn my heart to ashes!

A GHOSTLY MORNING

It is a misty morning, fringed with frost;
The air, I think, is Heaven's tearful milk,
Draping the mead in white, as soft as silk—
And, melting in the distance, all is lost:
The saddened sky, like some affrighted ghost,
With tear-dimmed eye and bloodshot, sees each whelk—
Each whitened brow, by which the meadows bilk
His love by frowning, feigning age at most!

A sleepy silence hovers over all,
And lo! the breathless meadow seems to doze;
But, as my heels on ringing byways fall,
The silence shudders at the croaking crows—
While on the opaque tide, wrinkled and tall,
The wriggling images of trees repose!

GOD'S ACRE

This is God's acre—
Let none break her;
That is his shadow,
Death, the scarecrow!

THE CANOE

ON SEEING WHIRLS OF PHOSPHORUS FROM MY PADDLE

He sails in silence, gliding o'er
The milky way;
But whither, whither lies the shore—
No one can say!

And, as He paddles o'er Earth's bars,
As still as never,
He stirs to light a thousand stars,
That whirl forever!

So high on darkness doth He pass,
No eye can find Him;
For every starry whirl, alas!
He leaves behind Him!

Who is He? and whence comes this Dream?
Who dares deliver
The Unborn Worlds? . . . What then, they seem
Sublime Forever!

THE WINE-PRESS

I see a fine, old wine-press,
What marble, white as snow—
And streams of purple sweetness
Splash in the urns below;

Ho! in the press a baby,
A white and rosy boy,
Is trampling grapes—what? Maybe
He only screams for joy!

But what is that, engraven
But half worn from the press?
Look, there, beneath that raven—
"L-I-F-E," I guess!

That boy—why is that Cupid?
And are those grapes our hearts?
Now does it not seem stupid
For them to play such parts!

And yet—I be confessing
The wine is madding sweet!
But oh! for all Love's pressing
How purple are his feet!

THE-LILY-OF-THE-FIELD

Ye lilies-of-the-field! How came ye red—
Is it not since the Saviour hath been dead?

REST

HAPPY the man, who lies—when life is shed—
At peace, with both the living and the dead;
No step disturbs the Soul, whose life was sound—
But Crime awakes her Sleeper, underground!

LAUGHTER

LAUGHTER is made of Incongruities—
And so are Dreams—oh! Laughter is a Dream:
Up! sulky Death—how Light his Sleep, who Sees,
Without a Smile, what Fools we Mortals seem!

DAWN

A WIND blew out among the stars—
That shook, like dandelions—
They shed their gold, and burst in gray,
As Dawn rose on his pinions!
An Angel plucked the morning-star—
It was the last to stay—
And blew its seeds of light afar,
"She loves me!—Comes today!"

AGE

SIX feet tall he used to be—
Now he's not as tall as me;
Strength is not in being tall,
He has been compressed—that's all!

THREE ROSES IN ONE

A WHITE rose is the ghost of all—
She doth on earth unfold
One rose, that is her naked self,
One red, and one of gold:
That rose is Love, as white as Death—
Blushing, is Life—but gold, the Soul—
For this White Rose draws from beneath
What lights her up, her gold heart's sheath,
What burns, or blushes through; so she—
Red, white, or gold—in one is three!

FANTASY: EPILOGUE

WITH rainbow wings my Fancy springs
  Up from the inlaid meadows—
And, soaring o'er the truth of things,
  Becomes the life of shadows;

I call her Fantasy, because
  In fancy she was here,
But, having dropt her earthly dress,
  She hath a higher sphere!